2016 NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATION PRIMER

CRITICAL EDUCATION ISSUES IN NORTH CAROLINA

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CELEBRATING 30 YEARS
1986 2016
PUBLIC SCHOOL FORUM of north carolina

STUDENTS

KEY ISSUES

North Carolina's student population is increasingly diverse and growing, leaving policymakers and school administrators with the challenge of meeting a new variety of unique needs in every classroom.

POPULATION GROWTH IN NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina is one of the nation's fastest-growing states ranking 9th in population in 2015 with an estimated 10,042,802 residents.[1] Between 2000 and 2010, North Carolina ranked 6th in population growth with a population increase of 18.5%, which was almost double the national rate of 9.7%.[2] Between 2010 and 2015 North Carolina's population grew at a rate of 5.3% compared to a national rate of 4.1%.[3]

North Carolina is projected to gain approximately one million residents in each decade through 2040; however, population growth is not consistent across all counties. Urban areas such as Raleigh and Charlotte have experienced significantly more growth since 2000 and are the main causes of the state's population growth. Seven counties concentrated in the northeast and central coast portions of the state decreased in population from 2000 to 2010, and thirty-eight counties are projected to lose population between 2010 and 2020.[4]

In North Carolina, the number of children in public schools is tracked by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) as Average Daily Membership, often referred to as ADM.

AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP (ADM) BY SCHOOL DISTRICT (2004-05 AND 2014-15)

School District	2004-05 ADM	2014-15 ADM	School District	2004-05 ADM	2014-15 ADM
Alamance-Burlington Schools	21,435	22,604	Mooresville Graded School District	4,476	5,924
Alexander County Schools	5,650	5,120	Jackson County Schools	3,569	3,676
Alleghany County Schools	1,489	1,387	Johnston County Schools	26,075	34,137
Anson County Schools	4,305	3,490	Jones County Schools	1,349	1,117
Ashe County Schools	3,176	3,096	Lee County Schools	9,056	9,936
Avery County Schools	2,258	2,098	Lenoir County Schools	9,788	8,962
Beaufort County Schools	7,127	6,937	Lincoln County Schools	11,441	11,581
Bertie County Schools	3,307	2,416	Macon County Schools	4,120	4,355
Bladen County Schools	5,636	4,670	Madison County Schools	2,597	2,434
Brunswick County Schools	10,788	12,332	Martin County Schools	4,400	3,301
Buncombe County Schools	24,942	24,761	McDowell County Schools	6,364	6,255

[1] U.S. Census North Carolina Quick Facts. Available at http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37000.html.
[2] Carolina Demography, *Population Growth & Population Aging in North Carolina Counties*. Available at http://demography.cpc.unc.edu/2013/10/14/population-growth-population-aging-in-north-carolina-counties/.
[3] U.S. Census Population Estimates. Available at http://www.census.gov/popest/data/state/totals/2015/.
[4] Carolina Demography, *Population Growth & Population Aging in North Carolina Counties*.

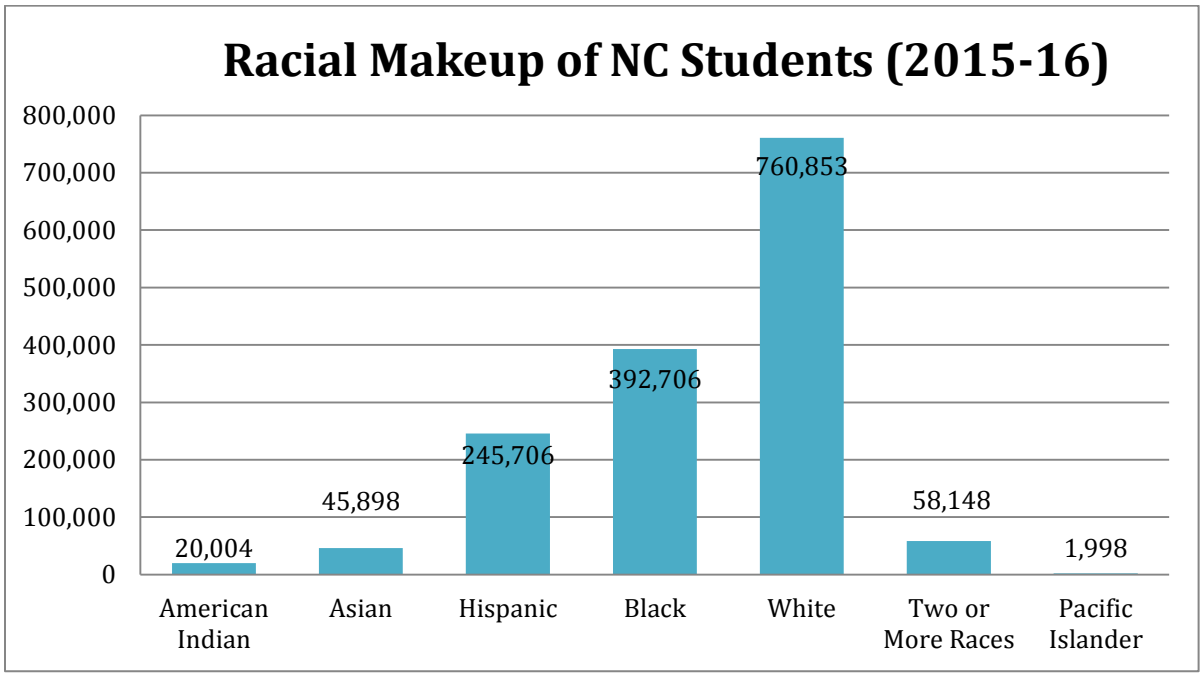
Asheville City Schools	3,789	4,295	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	117,179	144,497
Burke County Schools	14,392	12,504	Mitchell County Schools	2,252	1,930
Cabarrus County Schools	22,279	30,630	Montgomery County Schools	4,459	4,008
Kannapolis City Schools	4,593	5,378	Moore County Schools	11,598	12,802
Caldwell County Schools	12,850	11,918	Nash-Rocky Mount Schools	17,932	15,703
Camden County Schools	1,662	1,863	New Hanover County Schools	23,020	25,667
Carteret County Schools	8,103	8,336	Northampton County Schools	3,158	1,992
Caswell County Schools	3,281	2,716	Onslow County Schools	21,947	25,314
Catawba County Schools	16,803	16,579	Orange County Schools	6,619	7,454
Hickory City Schools	4,372	4,356	Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools	10,705	12,076
Newton Conover City Schools	2,790	3,125	Pamlico County Schools	1,626	1,273
Chatham County Schools	7,374	8,330	Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Schools	5,884	5,744
Cherokee County Schools	3,606	3,271	Pender County Schools	7,065	8,808
Edenton-Chowan Schools	2,432	2,176	Perquimans County Schools	1,706	1,718
Clay County Schools	1,266	1,278	Person County Schools	5,759	4,584
Cleveland County Schools	17,035	15,010	Pitt County Schools	21,374	23,613
Columbus County Schools	6,830	5,960	Polk County Schools	2,396	2,247
Whiteville City Schools	2,662	2,217	Randolph County Schools	18,073	17,766
Craven County Schools	14,377	14,105	Asheboro City Schools	4,477	4,744
Cumberland County Schools	51,663	50,258	Richmond County Schools	8,146	7,494
Currituck County Schools	3,854	3,853	Robeson County Schools	23,843	23,320
Dare County Schools	4,830	4,921	Rockingham County Schools	14,392	12,807
Davidson County Schools	19,520	19,459	Rowan-Salisbury Schools	20,531	19,788
Lexington City Schools	2,998	3,022	Rutherford County Schools	9,882	8,301
Thomasville City Schools	2,522	2,375	Sampson County Schools	8,138	8,465
Davie County Schools	6,234	6,295	Clinton City Schools	2,789	3,046
Duplin County Schools	8,759	9,703	Scotland County Schools	6,732	5,924
Durham Public Schools	30,307	33,314	Stanly County Schools	9,601	8,592
Edgecombe County Schools	7,495	5,854	Stokes County Schools	7,236	6,334
Winston Salem/Forsyth County Schools	47,800	53,648	Surry County Schools	8,622	8,218
Franklin County Schools	7,870	8,582	Elkin City Schools	1,205	1,219
Gaston County Schools	31,289	31,182	Mount Airy City Schools	1,809	1,612
Gates County Schools	1,959	1,633	Swain County Schools	1,762	1,950
Graham County Schools	1,196	1,185	Transylvania County Schools	3,752	3,466
Granville County Schools	8,580	7,988	Tyrrell County Schools	615	573

Greene County Schools	3,139	3,134	Union County Schools	28,535	41,296
Guilford County Schools	66,367	71,502	Vance County Schools	7,972	6,449
Halifax County Schools	5,053	2,939	Wake County Schools	113,547	153,488
Roanoke Rapids City Schools	2,948	2,907	Warren County Schools	3,035	2,300
Weldon City Schools	1,038	936	Washington County Schools	2,104	1,589
Harnett County Schools	16,783	20,099	Watauga County Schools	4,537	4,298
Haywood County Schools	7,746	7,280	Wayne County Schools	18,994	18,773
Henderson County Schools	12,292	13,537	Wilkes County Schools	9,898	9,777
Hertford County Schools	3,500	2,932	Wilson County Schools	12,344	12,216
Hoke County Schools	6,708	8,260	Yadkin County Schools	6,020	5,378
Hyde County Schools	640	571	Yancey County Schools	2,514	2,215
Iredell-Statesville Schools	19,291	20,759	**Total**	**1,332,009**	**1,433,592**

NC DPI ADM 2004-05 and ADM 2014-15. Available at http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/fbs/accounting/data/.

RACIAL MAKEUP OF NORTH CAROLINA STUDENTS

North Carolina's student population is becoming increasingly diverse. In the 2015-16 school year, 1.3% of public school students were American Indian, 3.0% were Asian, 16.1% were Hispanic, 25.7% were black, 49.9% were white, 3.8% were two or more races, and 0.1% were Pacific Islander.[5] These numbers include both traditional public school and charter school students.



Source: NC DPI 2015-16 Grade, Race, Sex Data.

[5] NC DPI 2015-16 Grade, Race, Sex Data. Available at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/fbs/accounting/data/.

RACIAL MAKEUP OF N.C. STUDENTS BY SCHOOL DISTRICT (2015-16)

School District	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Black	White	Two or More Races	Pacific Islander
Alamance-Burlington Schools	102	316	5,657	5,018	10,683	974	27
Alexander County Schools	4	93	459	203	4,028	194	3
Alleghany County Schools	6	4	291	10	1,067	27	0
Anson County Schools	14	57	136	1,975	1,161	91	0
Ashe County Schools	2	17	306	18	2,726	30	0
Avery County Schools	6	13	229	8	1,798	34	2
Beaufort County Schools	9	22	1,070	2,295	3,246	257	5
Bertie County Schools	11	9	57	1,887	330	33	0
Bladen County Schools	83	15	836	1,738	1,779	198	0
Brunswick County Schools	110	85	1,556	1,870	8,330	521	13
Buncombe County Schools	97	318	3,867	1,650	17,553	996	82
Asheville City Schools	6	52	354	1,010	2,706	286	9
Burke County Schools	24	784	1,670	615	8,707	593	27
Cabarrus County Schools	167	1,140	4,868	6,198	17,663	1,209	55
Kannapolis City Schools	21	75	1,507	1,515	1,915	286	3
Caldwell County Schools	11	83	1,182	639	9,644	513	2
Camden County Schools	4	21	53	191	1,447	96	5
Carteret County Public Schools	37	86	708	549	6,510	474	16
Caswell County Schools	9	6	189	1,000	1,410	97	0
Catawba County Schools	17	1,082	2,469	891	11,283	700	10
Hickory City Schools	4	179	1,007	888	1,908	314	2
Newton Conover City Schools	4	183	771	382	1,564	198	1
Chatham County Schools	21	93	2,569	1,011	4,403	362	1
Cherokee County Schools	50	25	179	53	2,960	100	1
Edenton-Chowan Schools	3	11	125	899	967	72	1
Clay County Schools	7	5	79	12	1,184	22	1
Cleveland County Schools	14	112	829	3,993	9,358	727	3
Columbus County Schools	315	7	589	1,874	3,082	99	3
Whiteville City Schools	23	12	233	951	916	113	0
Craven County Schools	39	591	1,357	4,098	7,301	716	39
Cumberland County Schools	919	884	6,174	22,941	15,556	3,774	237
Currituck County Schools	6	19	204	221	3,238	308	3
Dare County Schools	10	44	704	127	3,896	196	7
Davidson County Schools	63	244	1,602	672	16,321	455	9
Lexington City Schools	14	145	1,012	912	775	199	5
Thomasville City Schools	9	16	735	903	564	161	2
Davie County Schools	16	55	817	392	4,749	292	2
Duplin County Schools	77	29	3,912	2,265	3,287	176	14
Durham Public Schools	109	801	9,543	15,933	6,127	959	30
Edgecombe County Public Schools	7	6	587	3,391	1,843	124	2

Winston Salem/Forsyth County Schools	119	1,348	13,298	15,453	21,851	2,157	52
Franklin County Schools	40	45	1,428	2,607	4,054	290	6
Gaston County Schools	73	454	3,659	6,766	19,271	1,310	22
Gates County Schools	8	1	28	560	960	67	1
Graham County Schools	187	3	41	3	931	8	0
Granville County Schools	23	50	1,243	2,669	3,637	293	3
Greene County Schools	8	4	979	1,194	943	46	0
Guilford County Schools	326	4,258	10,278	29,303	24,589	2,814	113
Halifax County Schools	152	4	101	2,311	120	45	6
Roanoke Rapids City Schools	10	62	159	757	1,794	79	2
Weldon City Schools	3	1	8	835	31	13	0
Harnett County Schools	201	152	3,949	5,028	9,984	1,169	60
Haywood County Schools	53	39	573	74	6,279	149	6
Henderson County Schools	19	168	3,184	562	9,156	543	66
Hertford County Schools	22	21	102	2,323	430	48	2
Hoke County Schools	815	71	1,746	3,002	2,246	515	16
Hyde County Schools	0	0	115	140	315	20	0
Iredell-Statesville Schools	32	565	2,563	2,988	13,968	609	18
Mooresville Graded School District	10	116	637	928	4,055	284	10
Jackson County Schools	294	52	468	57	2,748	99	6
Johnston County Schools	134	245	7,624	5,519	19,951	1,099	24
Jones County Schools	1	4	111	434	506	37	0
Lee County Schools	71	83	3,380	2,164	4,040	318	5
Lenoir County Public Schools	17	58	1,151	4,234	3,284	203	6
Lincoln County Schools	16	85	1,254	710	9,016	406	7
Macon County Schools	19	42	756	36	3,424	96	4
Madison County Schools	3	9	87	9	2,284	24	1
Martin County Schools	2	24	235	1,704	1,214	80	0
McDowell County Schools	29	64	778	182	4,989	199	4
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	678	8,794	32,046	57,884	42,915	3,468	167
Mitchell County Schools	2	14	163	5	1,690	21	1
Montgomery County Schools	3	75	1,337	792	1,694	113	5
Moore County Schools	158	145	1,598	2,169	8,323	425	12
Nash-Rocky Mount Schools	84	110	1,860	8,105	5,002	482	14
New Hanover County Schools	85	399	3,153	5,361	16,077	979	33
Northampton County Schools	7	6	77	1,419	289	58	1
Onslow County Schools	140	339	3,473	4,982	14,937	2,014	95
Orange County Schools	23	87	1,490	1,156	4,484	288	6
Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools	41	1,790	1,876	1,323	6,198	751	3
Pamlico County Schools	5	9	99	293	821	68	0
Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools	17	50	400	2,539	2,510	263	7
Pender County Schools	46	48	1,155	1,347	6,089	294	6

Perquimans County Schools	4	6	54	464	1,122	58	0
Person County Schools	25	13	398	1,597	2,356	213	2
Pitt County Schools	49	348	2,609	11,315	8,326	816	11
Polk County Schools	5	5	260	122	1,696	88	0
Randolph County Schools	87	238	2,933	661	13,102	601	9
Asheboro City Schools	6	83	2,093	671	1,658	202	0
Richmond County Schools	272	49	800	2,682	3,321	299	8
Public Schools of Robeson County	9,902	134	3,476	5,775	3,223	908	27
Rockingham County Schools	39	80	1,642	2,427	7,889	647	9
Rowan-Salisbury Schools	60	225	3,068	3,667	12,013	674	20
Rutherford County Schools	26	37	568	998	6,110	544	2
Sampson County Schools	68	18	3,035	1,638	3,403	282	8
Clinton City Schools	87	24	811	1,169	867	106	1
Scotland County Schools	936	55	168	2,688	1,770	248	6
Stanly County Schools	24	289	716	1,100	6,074	372	7
Stokes County Schools	17	19	286	185	5,488	184	5
Surry County Schools	9	31	1,844	195	5,959	176	1
Elkin City Schools	0	8	234	47	865	45	0
Mount Airy City Schools	1	19	291	140	1,091	63	0
Swain County Schools	457	10	95	15	1,277	82	1
Transylvania County Schools	11	20	233	173	2,838	183	9
Tyrrell County Schools	1	19	101	198	214	43	1
Union County Public Schools	102	1,247	6,924	5,377	27,084	1,206	14
Vance County Schools	10	56	880	3,984	1,303	182	6
Wake County Schools	446	11,910	26,414	37,206	74,651	5,829	188
Warren County Schools	145	6	166	1,477	397	46	2
Washington County Schools	2	7	121	1,110	283	28	0
Watauga County Schools	8	54	352	48	3,727	119	4
Wayne County Public Schools	36	239	3,912	6,527	7,238	734	27
Wilkes County Schools	25	46	1,321	376	7,540	346	2
Wilson County Schools	28	148	2,255	5,536	3,881	346	6
Yadkin County Schools	16	23	1,252	158	3,807	118	10
Yancey County Schools	7	2	281	15	1,875	26	0

NC DPI Grade, Race, Sex, 2015-16

STATE AND LOCAL ROLE IN EDUCATION

KEY ISSUES

The Governor and his or her Education Advisor, the State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Department of Public Instruction, and the North Carolina General Assembly all have influence on the direction of education policy and governance in North Carolina.

With a majority of the education budget for public schools coming from the state, the state plays an important role in providing resources, setting policy, and ensuring equity and quality in North Carolina schools. Still, while the majority of resources and major policies come from the state, local education agencies have a great deal of control over the functions of schools, including the hiring and firing of teachers and administrators, and the setting of curriculum.

STATE-LEVEL GOVERNING ENTITIES AND THEIR ROLES IN FORMULATING EDUCATION POLICY

North Carolina's public school system is heavily funded by the state government, with 64% of school funds coming from the state in the 2014-15 school year. In the same year, local dollars contributed 24% of the total budget, with federal funding for North Carolina's public schools amounting to 12% of total education funding.[1]

During the Great Depression, North Carolina took on the responsibility for funding the operations of public schools with the passing of the 1933 School Machinery Act. As the State took on the responsibility for funding a larger percentage of school budgets, it also took on additional governance and decision-making authority. Since the 1933 Act, North Carolina's state government responsibilities have grown to include:

- ✓ Majority of personnel issues, ranging from state salary schedules to standardized fringe benefit and retirement plans;
- ✓ Personnel allocations through class size provisions and a variety of personnel allocation formulas and provisions;
- ✓ Standardized testing policies;
- ✓ Pay for performance rewards and consequences based on student performance on tests; and
- ✓ Certification and licensing standards for educators.

DIVISION OF AUTHORITY AT STATE LEVEL

While the State Board of Education is charged with setting overall state policy regarding education, the State Board lacks the ability to provide funding for education policy initiatives. The NC General Assembly's control over the allocation of funding grants it great power in directing education policy in North Carolina. The Governor also influences education policy by proposing new initiatives through his/her annual budget presentation and by exercising veto power.

[1] NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 22 – Current Expense Expenditure by Source of Funds. Available at http://apps.schools.nc.gov/pls/apex/f?p=1:1:0.

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction is an elected position, chosen by voters across the state in general elections every four years. Like the Governor, the State Superintendent commands positional power and frequently advances new initiatives. In recent years however, legislative action has altered the amount of authority given to the State Board of Education and State Superintendent. As of 2006-07, the State Board of Education has the authority to oversee the day-to-day operations of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Department Of Public Instruction

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) is charged with carrying out the directives of the State Board of Education and the General Assembly. NC DPI employees are responsible for all federal and state requirements of the public education system, including testing, accountability, curriculum, and all licensure and personnel issues for the state.

Education Decision-Making Process

While school governance (see page 3) appears straightforward, the process of education decision-making is anything but simple. A new idea proposed by the Governor, the State Board of Education, or the State Superintendent can be supported or opposed by any of the same three entities. A proposed bill will advance to the General Assembly where it must run a gauntlet from the Education Committee to the Education Appropriations Committee in both the House and the Senate (if it requires funding); from there, it will go to the full House or Senate Budget Committee and then to a vote of the entire membership of each respective body.

That process must be completed in both the House and Senate and, typically, the bill's final budget proposal will be decided by the joint House and Senate Budget Conference Committee. That proposal then returns for a vote in both the House and Senate. The budget and other education initiatives that survive the process are then subject to approval or veto by the Governor.

The Role of Local Boards of Education & County Commissioners

As noted, the state government has increasingly assumed education decision-making authority; however, the influence that locally elected officials hold over schools should not be underestimated. Locally elected school boards shape policy and make critical decisions related to schools, while the county commissioners approve any local initiatives that require new local funds. By constitutional law and statute, local school boards and/or county commissioners are responsible for:

- ✓ Construction and maintenance of school facilities;
- ✓ Providing transportation to students;
- ✓ Hiring personnel, especially local school superintendents; and
- ✓ Funding programs, equipment, material, technology, and personnel not provided by state funding.

GOVERNANCE OF NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Constitution

Article I Declaration of Rights
Sec. 15 Education
The people have a right to the privilege of education,
and it is the duty of the State to guard and maintain that right.

Article III Executive
Sec. 5 Duties of Governor
to prepare and recommend to the General Assembly
a comprehensive budget of the anticipated revenue and proposed expenditures of the State...
and administer [the budget as enacted by the General Assembly.]

Article IX Education
Sec. 4 State Board of Education
(members appointed by the Governor)
shall supervise and administer the free public school system
and the education funds
and... make all rules and regulations...
subject to the laws enacted by the General Assembly

Article IX Education
Sec. 4 Superintendent of Public Instruction
(elected by the people)
shall be secretary and chief administrative officer
of the State Board of Education

Article IX Education
Sec. 2 The General Assembly
By taxation shall provide a general and uniform system
of free public schools... wherein equal opportunities
Shall be provided for all children.
(Final decision on policy & funding)

Sec. 2 Local Units of Government
Boards of County Commissioners have
responsibility for the financial support
of the free public schools as the
General Assembly deem[s] appropriate.
Fund buildings, transportation, utilities,
and other items as per the LEA Budget.
(General Statutes 153A, 115C-426 to 115C-437)

Local Boards of Education
Provide general control and supervision
of all matter pertaining to public schools in the
local administrative unit and enforce the
school law. Prepare LEA Budget for
submission to County Commission.
(General Statues 115C-35 to 115C-50)

Local Superintendent
(serves at pleasure of Local Board)

THE 2015-17 BUDGET PREPARATION PROCESS

Article III, Section 5 of the North Carolina Constitution stipulates that *"the Governor shall prepare and recommend to the General Assembly a comprehensive budget of the anticipated revenue and proposed expenditures of the State for the ensuing fiscal period."* In addition, the Constitution requires that the Governor's budget *"shall not exceed the total of receipts during that fiscal period and the surplus remaining in the State Treasury at the beginning of the period."*

The Governor is directed by the Constitution to *"continually survey the collection of the revenue and shall affect the necessary economies in State expenditures...."* The Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM) implement the budget process under the direction of the State Budget Officer.

The Governor can choose to reflect the priorities of certain state agencies by recommending the same level of funding for an item, the same source of funding (non-recurring or recurring) for an item, or not including an item at all in his/her proposed budget.

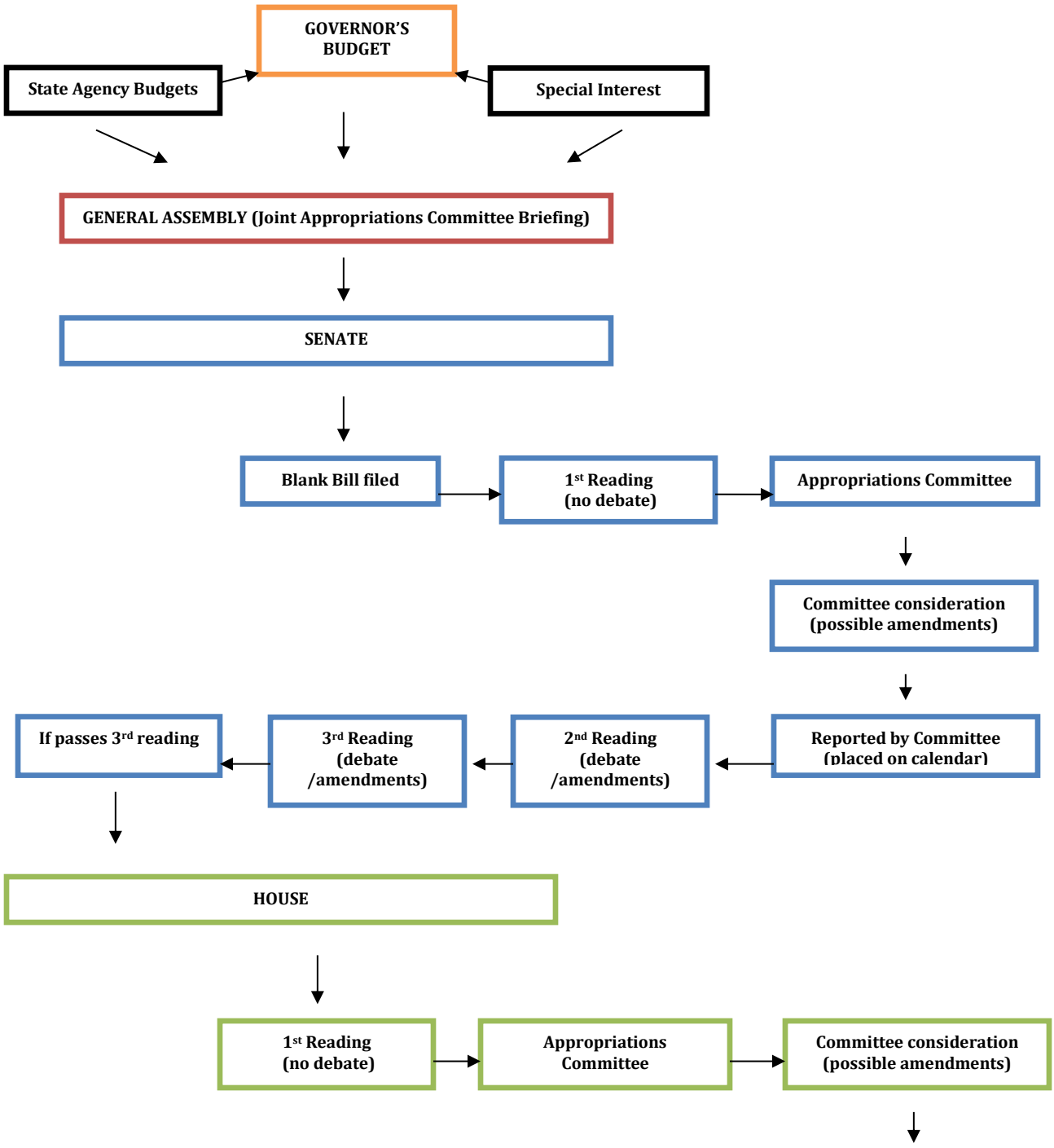
The Governor presented a two-year biennium budget to the General Assembly upon the opening of the General Assembly's long session in January 2015. Following legislative review, a two-year budget was approved by the General Assembly and certified by the OSBM in September 2015.

The budget process runs a "dual" track during the even numbered years when the General Assembly revisits the second year of the biennial budget. The Governor's staff worked with the OSBM in the second year of the biennial budget to prepare the Governor's Supplemental Budget Request for 2016-2017 for submission to the 2016 Short Session of the General Assembly.

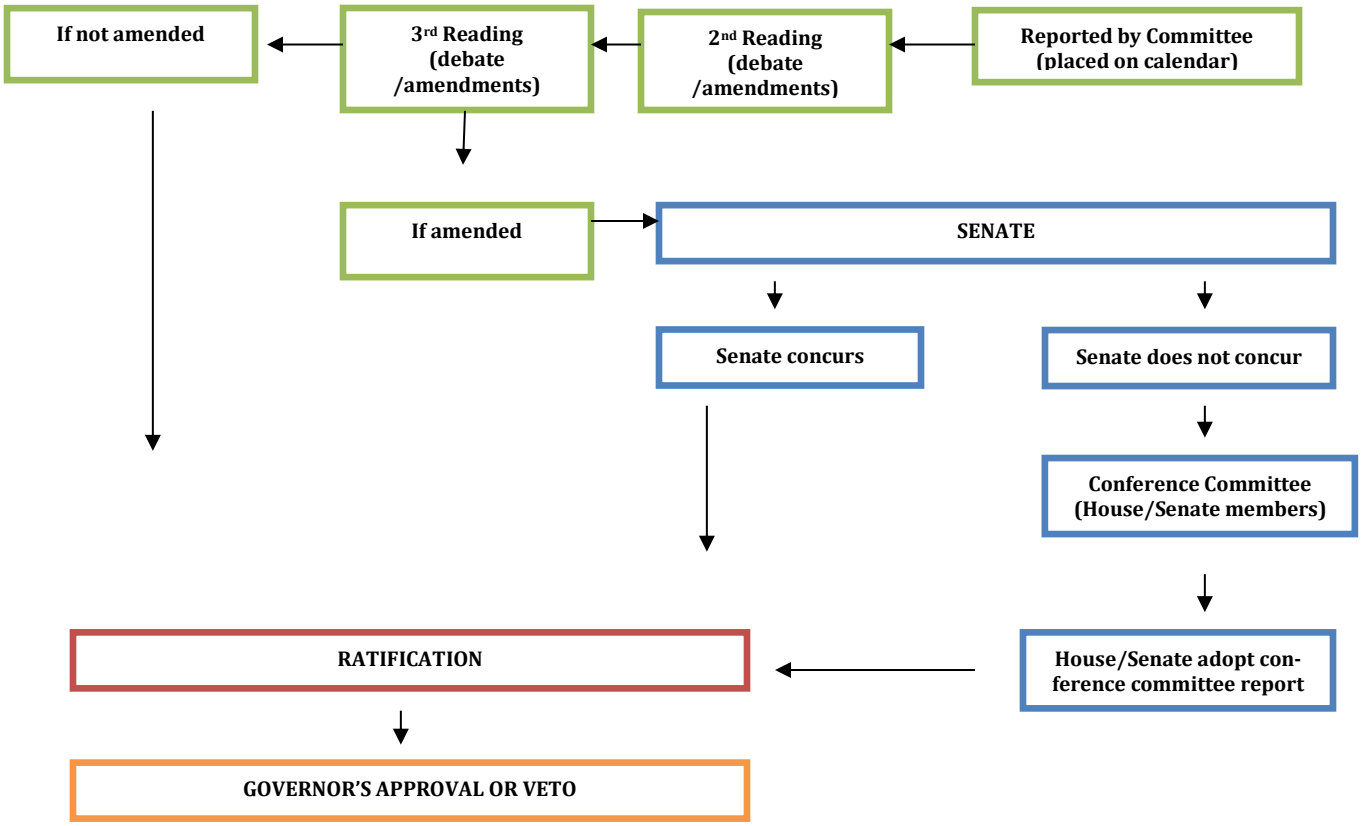
During the Short Session, the General Assembly debates the Governor's supplemental request, state agencies' requests, and its own items that are under consideration. The OSBM directed the implementation of the schedule for the 2015-2017 budget preparation process according to the schedule provided in the chart on page five.

Once the Governor's budget is presented to the General Assembly, it is not considered in isolation. The House and Senate also propose their own budgets for consideration during this process. State agencies are then given an opportunity to respond to the budget requests and make a case for items not recommended. In addition, other organizations and associations have recommendations for budget items. Some of these groups are well organized and have strong constituencies. Depending upon their "modes of leverage," (political endorsements, financial contributions, etc.) these organizations can garner support for their issues, or provide the ammunition to "kill" an item. The flow chart on page five outlines the path of the budget bill as well as agency requests.

THE BUDGET PROCESS[2]



[2]At the Joint Appropriations Committee briefing, the State Budget Officer presents the Governor's budget to a joint session of the House and Senate Appropriations committees. Education subcommittees will be briefed jointly until the chamber of bill origination begins to make decisions. Then Committees meet separately. The Chamber leadership gives parameters for spending. Subcommittees will determine budgets. The full Appropriations Committee will vote on the Budget Bill. The bill then becomes the Committee substitute for the Blank Bill and goes to the Chamber Floor and proceeds from that point. The Budget Bill originates in each chamber in alternate years.


Reported by Committee (placed on calendar)
2nd Reading (debate /amendments)
3rd Reading (debate /amendments)
If not amended
If amended
SENATE
Senate concurs
Senate does not concur
Conference Committee (House/Senate members)
House/Senate adopt conference committee report
RATIFICATION
GOVERNOR'S APPROVAL OR VETO

FEDERAL ROLE IN EDUCATION

KEY ISSUES

The majority of decisions on public education are made at the state and local levels, but the federal government does contribute resources to North Carolina's public school system. Although it fluctuates year-to-year, about 12% of North Carolina's education comes from the federal government.

In December 2015, President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) into law, reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for the first time since 2001 when No Child Left Behind was signed into law.

OVERVIEW

In the United States, it is the responsibility of states and communities to establish schools, develop standards and curricula, set graduation requirements, and determine the logistics of school governance. While education policy is mostly determined by state and local administrative units, the federal government plays an important role in funding, overseeing, and developing education policies. The federal government currently provides about 12% of the funding to schools in North Carolina in the forms of grants and recurring support.

Much of that funding is channeled through the US Department of Education, but portions of it come through the Department of Health and Human Services (Head Start Program) or the Department of Agriculture (School Lunch Program). Generally speaking, these funds are targeted to areas of highest need. Allocating federal funding in a targeted way has allowed the U.S. Department of Education to become an "emergency response system," to fill in funding gaps between state and local support in areas of highest need. The role of the federal government in education is minimal when compared to the state and local roles, but the federal government does play an important role in guiding and overseeing education on a national scale.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The U.S. Department of Education was created in 1867 and became a Cabinet level agency in 1980. The Department's mission is to promote student achievement by ensuring equal access and developing efficient school systems. The chief tasks of the U.S. Department of Education include:

- Establishing, allocating, and monitoring federal financial aid programs for education
- Collecting data on schools nationwide
- Focusing national attention on key educational issues
- Prohibiting discrimination and ensuring equal access to education

FEDERAL PROGRAM MONITORING AND SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION

The NC Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) houses the Federal Program Monitoring and Support Services Division, which provides oversight of state and local programs to ensure compliance with federal regulations and to guard against waste, fraud, and abuse. The division oversees federal programs such as Title I (discussed in more detail below), Title IV, the Rural Education Achievement Program, and Homeless Education. This division monitors the allocation of federal funds to ensure that such funds contribute to student achievement and progress. The Division is subdivided into two sections: the Program Monitoring Section, which works to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to access a high-quality

education; and the Support Service Division, which aids LEAs in preventing violence and illegal substance abuse at schools to ensure a safe and healthy learning environment for students.

Race To The Top

North Carolina received one of 12 federal Race to the Top (RttT) competitive grants in 2010, bringing nearly $400 million to the state's public school system over a four year period. The RttT grant was designed to spur public school innovation, and was awarded to states with promising plans and concrete goals toward school improvement.

This funding enabled North Carolina to remodel our state system through the READY initiative, an ambitious plan to increase student achievement, close achievement gaps and continue to increase the number of career- and college- ready graduates by making sure every student has an excellent teacher.[1]

Title I: Improving Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

Title I provides financial assistance through State educational agencies (SEAs) to local educational agencies (LEAs) and public schools with high numbers or percentages of poor children to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards.

Schools enrolling at least 40 percent of students from poor families are eligible to use Title I funds for schoolwide programs that serve all children in the school. Schools with poverty rates below 40 percent, or those choosing not to operate a schoolwide program, offer a "targeted assistance program" in which the school identifies students who are failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet the state's challenging performance standards, then designs, in consultation with parents, staff, and district staff, an instructional program to meet the needs of those students. Both schoolwide and targeted assistance programs must be based on effective means of improving student achievement and include strategies to support parental involvement.

Title I reaches about 1.5 million students enrolled in both public and private schools. Title I funds may be used for children from preschool age to high school, but most of the students served (65 percent) are in grades 1 through 6; another 12 percent are in preschool and kindergarten programs.[2]

National Title I Distinguished Schools Program

The National Title I Distinguished Schools program recognizes exemplary Title I schools that hold students to high standards and demonstrate exemplary school effectiveness in:

- Teaching and learning based on the approved state curriculum,
- Use of research-based instructional strategies,
- Opportunities provided for all students to achieve,
- Established partnerships with parents, families, and the community,
- Implementation of sustained research-based professional development, and
- Innovation and modeling for other schools.

Selected schools are recognized in one of two categories. Schools in the Sustained Achievement category are recognized for showing a high (at least 80 percent) level of student proficiency in reading and mathematics and making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the most recent two years. Schools in the Closing the

[1] NC DPI, NC Race to the Top. Available at http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/rttt/.
[2] NC DPI, Title I. Available at http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/program-monitoring/titleIA/.

Achievement Gap category are recognized for making significant progress in closing the achievement gap between student groups.

Since 1996, North Carolina has recognized Title I schools through this program, sponsored by the National Title I Association. Each year two North Carolina schools are recognized at the national level.

HISTORICAL FEDERAL LEGISLATION

ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965 as part of the "War on Poverty" program. ESEA has been the most far-reaching federal legislation affecting education passed at the national level. The bill aims to narrow the achievement gaps between students by allocating funding for primary and secondary education, emphasizing equal access to education, and establishing high standards and accountability. The act was originally authorized through 1965; however, the government has reauthorized the act every five years since its enactment until 2001. The current reauthorization of ESEA is the Every Student Succeeds Act, signed in December 2015.

Below are the main provisions of the original ESEA and a few of the earliest additions to the act.

- Title I—Financial Assistance To Local Educational Agencies For The Education Of Children Of Low-Income Families
- Title II—School Library Resources, Textbooks, and other Instructional Materials
- Title III—Supplementary Educational Centers and Services
- Title IV—Educational Research And Training
- Title V—Grants To Strengthen State Departments Of Education
- Title VI—General Provisions
- New Titles Created by Early Amendments to 1965 Law
- **1966 amendments (Public Law 89-750)**
- Title VI - Aid to Handicapped Children (1965 title VI becomes Title VII)
- **1967 amendments (Public Law 90-247)**
- Title VII - Bilingual Education Programs (1966 title VII becomes Title VIII

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

MAJOR POLICY PROVISIONS OF NCLB

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 into law, which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act at that time. The major focus of the legislation was to raise academic standards for all students and to hold states accountable for student performance. NCLB was based on four principles of President George W. Bush's education reform plan:

1. Stronger accountability for results
2. Expanded flexibility and local control
3. Expanded options for parents
4. Emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work

NCLB mandated that by 2005-06, states must annually test students in grades 3-8 in reading and mathematics and by 2007-08, students must be tested once in elementary, middle, and high school in science. States were also required to participate in the 4th and 8th grade reading and mathematics National Assessment of

Educational Progress (NAEP) tests to provide a common measure of comparison across states. The law required that all students must be proficient on state assessments by 2013-14. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) has been used to determine school proficiency. To make AYP, each subgroup of students within a school and the school as a whole must have 95% participation in state exams and must meet state-set proficiency targets.

Flexibility and NCLB Waivers

In May 2012, North Carolina was granted flexibility waivers from many of the NCLB provisions. Waivers granted by the U.S. Department of Education made significant changes to North Carolina's implementation of ESEA's requirements especially in the areas of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), parent notifications, public school choice and Supplemental Educational Services. This flexibility allowed North Carolina's public school system to move forward with strengthened College and Career Ready expectations for all students, new ways to hold Title I schools accountable for students' academic proficiency, and new initiatives to support effective instruction and leadership. Many of the former strict federal requirements regarding AYP and sanctions for schools that do not make AYP were no longer required statewide and were left to the local school districts to address.

With the waiver, schools were still measured against Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) calculated and reported under NCLB, but they are more flexible than AYP. AMOs include more specific achievement targets for each student subgroup, guarantee that at least 95 percent of students participate in testing, establish high school graduation rate targets for each student subgroup, and attendance rate targets for K-8 students.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The Every Student Succeeds Act is the latest reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act and was approved by Congress in December 2015. This law provides significant federal support for programs to serve students in kindergarten through 12th grade and replaces the No Child Left Behind legislation. North Carolina and all other states will operate under its current federal plan until the final rules are completed for the Every Student Succeeds Act, which is expected in the winter of 2016-17.

General Timeline for Developing North Carolina's Every Student Succeeds Plan

2016	
January	Completion of timeline and work group assignments
April/May	Regional Public Comment Sessions in Wilmington, Cary, Charlotte, Bethel, Kernersville, and Black Mountain Initial meeting with Committee of Practitioners and external stakeholders External stakeholders input collected
June/July	Develop NC's draft plan
September/October	Plan revisions based on additional stakeholder input Public comment period Conduct regional public comment sessions state-wide
November	Finalize state plan
December	Seek State Board of Education approval of plan 30-Day Governor's review period
2017	

January	Present to General Assembly Education Committee(s)
February	Submit to the US Department of Education

Source: NC DPI, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Updated March 9, 2016.
Available at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/program-monitoring/succeeds/.

Some of the aspects of the new law are below[3]:

GENERAL

- ESSA places many limitations on the authority of the U.S. Secretary of Education, including the inability to require additions or deletions to a state's academic content standards or to prescribe specific goals of progress, specific assessments, weights of measures or indicators, etc.
- The U.S. Department of Education will still need to issue regulations but they cannot add new requirements that go beyond what is required in the law.
- All current ESEA Flexibility Waivers will be null and void as of August 1, 2016.
- Any schools currently identified as priority and focus schools must be maintained for the 2016-17 school year.
- Implementation of new state plans (once approved by the U.S. Department of Education) will start with the 2017-18 school year.

ASSESSMENTS AND REPORTING

- ESSA maintains annual assessments in grades 3-8 and high school.
- It reaffirms that states are in control of their standards (which must be challenging) and assessments.
- It eliminates "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) under NCLB.
- It provides for innovative assessment pilots at the state level so states can research new and improved methods of measuring student progress from year to year. Up to seven (7) states may be selected but that number could increase over time. It will be up to the Secretary of Education to determine the application process and timeline for submission to be one of the pilot states.
- It maintains many reporting requirements including the State Report Card (SRC). SRC data are expanded to include information on homeless students, foster youth, students of parents on active duty in the military, information on acquisition of English proficiency by English Learners and professional qualifications of teachers.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- It sets parameters for a state's accountability systems, but gives each state the flexibility to design a school accountability system that best meet the needs of the students in the state.
- The accountability plans must include goals for academic indicators (improved academic achievement on state assessments, a measure of student growth or other statewide academic indicator for elementary and middle schools, graduation rates for high schools, and progress in achieving proficiency for English Learners) and a measure of school quality and student success (examples include student and educator engagement, access and completion of advanced coursework, postsecondary readiness, school climate and safety). Participation rates on the assessments must also be included in the plan.

[3] NC DPI, Brief Highlights of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
Available at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/program-monitoring/succeeds/highlights.pdf.

TEACHER QUALITY

- ESSA gives states the flexibility to work with local stakeholders to determine how educators should be evaluated and supported each year.

DISTRICT AND SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS

- There is no set of required federal sanctions, but interventions used in schools needing assistance and support must be evidence-based.
- States will have to identify, at a minimum, the lowest 5% of Title I schools and high schools with graduation rates lower than 67%. These are the schools that are part of Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI).
- LEAs must develop and implement CSI plans for lowest-performing schools – State must approve plans.
- States also have to identify schools with consistently underperforming subgroups for Targeted Support and Improvement.

FUNDING AND FORMULAS

- Eliminates the federal School Improvement Grants (SIG), but allows states to reserve 7% of Title I funds to make grants available to low-performing schools.
- A portion of State Assessment grants will be made available as a separate allocation to states to conduct audits of state or local assessments as a way to reduce redundant assessments.
- Combines some 50 programs into a big block grant under Title IV.
- Authorizes a Preschool Development Grants Program through the Department of Health and Human Services.

For more information on North Carolina's transition to ESSA, visit
http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/program-monitoring/succeeds/essa-faq.pdf.

SCHOOL FINANCE

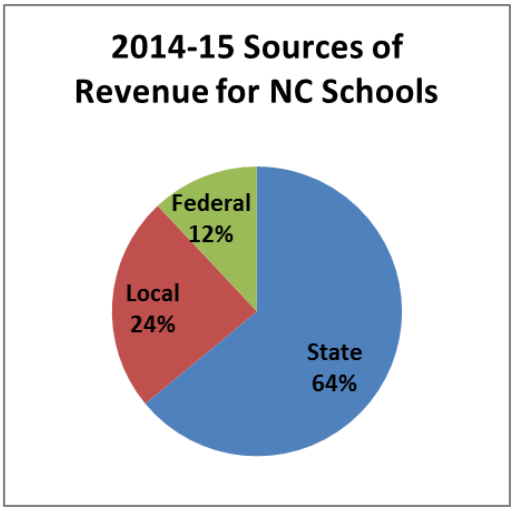
KEY ISSUES

State, federal, and local resources contribute to public education. With resources from all three sources changing yearly, schools and districts are continually working to anticipate funding so they can appropriately budget for recurring expenses and larger investments.

For 20 years, North Carolina has been involved in legal proceedings regarding the state's constitutional obligation to provide a "general and uniform system of free public schools."[1] The central issues presented in these cases relate to the provision of equitable educational opportunities to all North Carolina students. In 1997, the Supreme Court of North Carolina unanimously held that all children residing in North Carolina have a fundamental right under the state constitution to the "opportunity to receive a sound basic education."[2]

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Funding for North Carolina's public schools comes from a combination of federal, state, and local resources. According to North Carolina's State Constitution, the North Carolina General Assembly is responsible for providing by taxation and otherwise for a general and uniform system of free public schools. Thus, the state maintains the main responsibility for all current expenses of public education. North Carolina public schools spent over $12.6 billion in the 2014-15 school year using a combination of state, federal, and local resources, with the majority of that funding coming from the state.[3]



TYPES OF FUNDING

STATE FUNDING

- Funding for personnel and services necessary for basic instruction.
- Allocations based on student and personnel numbers and district characteristics.
- Supplemental funding to small county school systems and low wealth school systems in an attempt to close the gap between resource-rich and resource-poor districts.

FEDERAL FUNDING

- Federal grants are accessible by competitive grant programs, state plans or applications, or direct appropriation.
- Many federal programs are targeted to low-income students and students with disabilities.
- Child nutrition is federally funded.

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[1] North Carolina State Constitution, Article IX, Section 2.
[2] *Leandro v. State*, 488 S.E.2d 249 (N.C. 1997).
[3] NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 22 – Current Expense Expenditure by Source of Funds.
Available at http://apps.schools.nc.gov/pls/apex/f?p=1:1:0.

LOCAL FUNDING

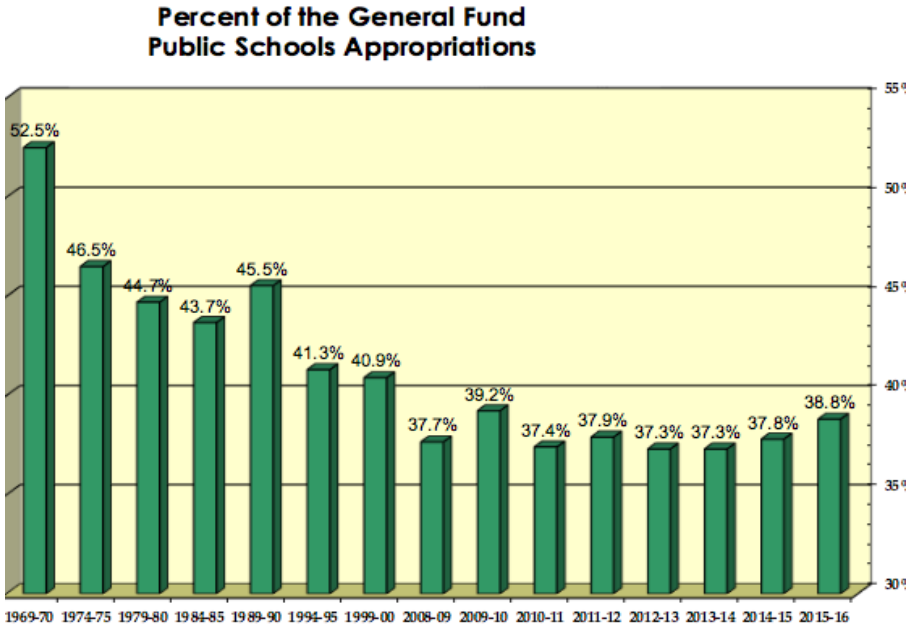
- Provide facilities, arts and language courses, advanced coursework, salary supplements, and additional teachers and staff.
- Local funding varies greatly between districts because it is based on local property tax levels (See the Forum's *2016 North Carolina Local School Finance Study* for a complete analysis of local school finances).[4]

Education remains the single largest budget item in most state budgets. States use income taxes, corporate taxes, sales taxes, and fees to fund a portion of the budgets in elementary and secondary schools.

Nationally in 2014-15, 46.3% of school funds came from state governments, 44.1% from local governments, and 9.6% from the federal governments.[5] In North Carolina, a relatively higher percentage of school funding comes from the state compared to the national average, due in large part to the state's constitution placing responsibility for public education squarely on the state.

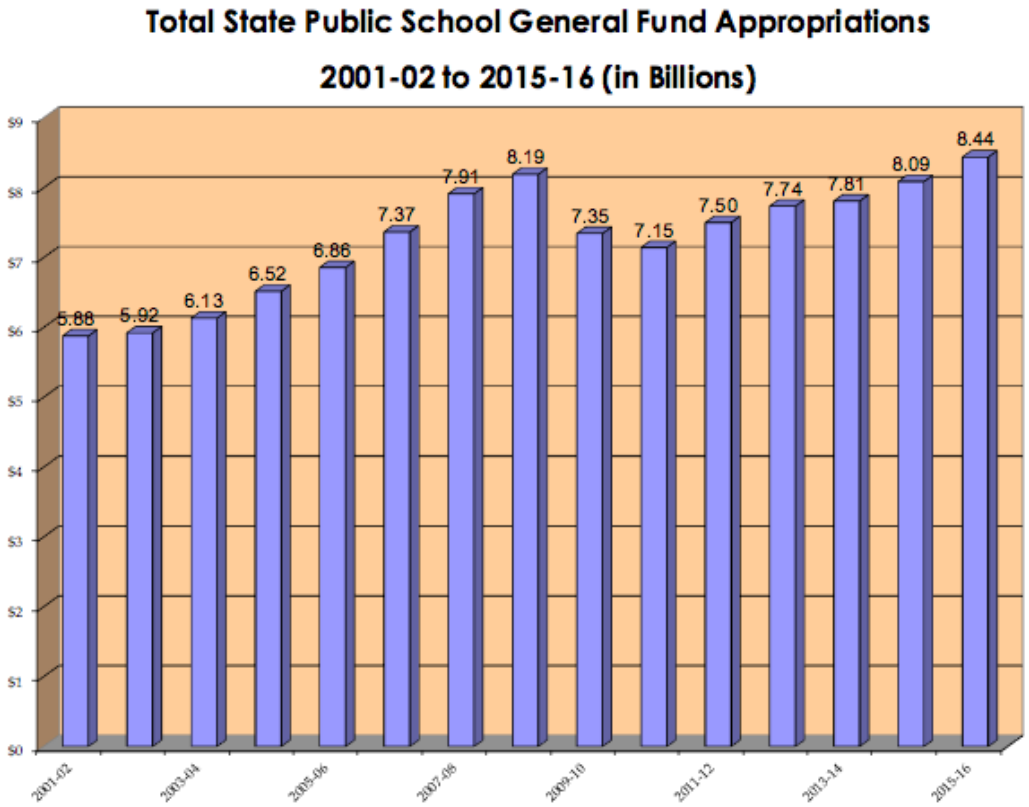
CHANGES TO EDUCATION FUNDING

The recession resulted in a major drop in state spending in North Carolina that took seven years to recover, with last year's overall education spending finally eclipsing pre-recession levels. In 2009-2010, state appropriations dropped to $7.35 billion, down from $8.19 billion in 2008-2009. This was a national trend and, at least in part, a result of the recession. Overall, funding has increased in North Carolina from $5.88 billion in 2001-02 to $8.44 billion in 2015-16, largely in response to a growing student population. While total dollars have increased for education funding since 1970, the share of the General Fund going to public schools has decreased by 13.7 percent. If public schools were currently funded at the same percentage as in FY 1969-70, an additional $3 billion would be available for schools.



[4] Public School Forum of North Carolina, *Local School Finance Study*. Available at https://www.ncforum.org/local-school-finance-study/.

[5] National Education Association, Rankings of the States 2014 and Estimates of School Statistics 2015. Available at http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/NEA_Rankings_And_Estimates-2015-03-11a.pdf.



PER-PUPIL SPENDING

According to 2014-2015 estimated data, North Carolina's per-pupil spending rank has dropped to 46th, down from 38th in 2007-08.[6] The state's highest rank was 34th in 1994-95. North Carolina spent $8,620 per student in 2014-2015, which is 73.4 percent of the US average of $11,732. The state ranks ahead of only five other states: Arizona, Indiana, North Dakota, Oklahoma and Utah. North Carolina currently ranks the lowest in the Southeast region in per-pupil expenditure. Since funding sources vary widely among states and within states, the total amount of money spent on each school age child in this country ranged from $7,461 to over $23,149 for the 2014-2015 school year. If North Carolina spent at the national average, schools would have an additional $3,112 dollars to spend per student.

Expenditures for K-12 Public Schools per Student Enrollment, 2014-15			
STATE	EXPENDITURES	STATE	EXPENDITURES
VERMONT	23,149	MISSOURI	10,755
NEW YORK	21,366	NEW MEXICO	10,633
NEW JERSEY	20,925	IOWA	10,613
ALASKA	20,117	LOUISIANA	10,511
RHODE ISLAND	19,676	WASHINGTON	10,055
CONNECTICUT	17,759	NEBRASKA	10,012
NEW HAMPSHIRE	17,115	SOUTH CAROLINA	10,005
MASSACHUSETTS	16,678	KANSAS	9,822
WYOMING	16,127	KENTUCKY	9,635
DELAWARE	15,858	ARKANSAS	9,573

[6] National Education Association, Rankings of the States 2014 and Estimates of School Statistics 2015. Available at http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/NEA_Rankings_And_Estimates-2015-03-11a.pdf.

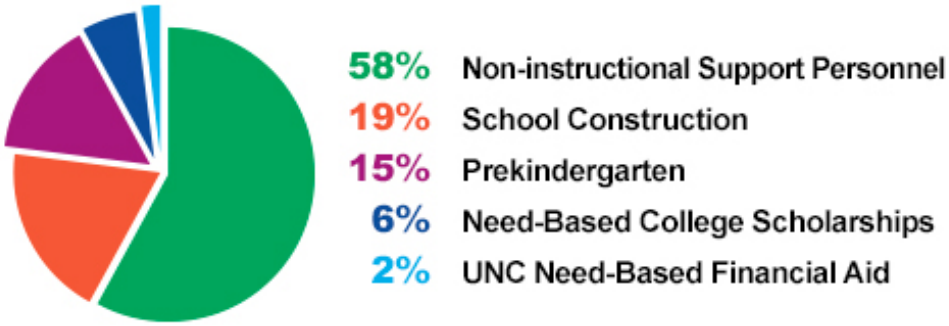
PENNSYLVANIA	15,691	FLORIDA	9,223
MICHIGAN	15,175	GEORGIA	9,291
WASHINGTON D.C.	14,779	TENNESSEE	9,105
MARYLAND	14,249	SOUTH DAKOTA	8,989
ILLINOIS	13,870	TEXAS	8,962
WEST VIRGINIA	12,859	IDAHO	8,928
MINNESOTA	12,180	MAINE	8,957
HAWAII	12,014	NEVADA	8,956
U.S. AVERAGE	**11,732**	ALABAMA	8,797
OHIO	11,530	MISSISSIPPI	8,779
WISCONSIN	11,424	**NORTH CAROLINA**	**8,620**
CALIFORNIA	11,145	NORTH DAKOTA	8,518
OREGON	11,127	INDIANA	8,034
VIRGINIA	10,980	OKLAHOMA	7,977
COLORADO	10,899	UTAH	7,711
MONTANA	10,859	ARIZONA	7,461

Source: NEA, Rankings of the States 2014 and Estimates of School Statistics 2015.

North Carolina Education Lottery

In August 2005, the General Assembly voted to create the North Carolina Education Lottery. The net proceeds of the lottery go to education expenses, including personnel, academic pre-kindergarten programs, school construction, and scholarships for college and university students with financial need. Lottery revenues have increased each year since the lottery began in North Carolina in 2007. In Fiscal Year 2015, the lottery provided $521.2 million to education, the largest payout in North Carolina history.[7]

Education Programs Receiving Lottery Funds in 2015



Source: NC Education Lottery

School systems and charter schools across the state received $320 million from lottery proceeds for personnel, including teachers and teacher assistants in grades K-3. Each county also received a share of almost $100 million allocated for school construction and repairs. About $78 million went to the state Pre-K program. Students who qualify for federal Pell Grants were eligible for the $31 million in scholarships made available through lottery funds in 2015, and another $10.4 million provided grants to students attending a UNC system school.

About 26 percent of lottery revenue goes to education with the remaining revenue going to prize payouts, commissions, and administrative expenses.

[7] NC Education Lottery Beneficiary. Available at http://www.nc-educationlottery.org/beneficiary.aspx.

Source: NC Education Lottery

SCHOOL FINANCE LITIGATION IN NORTH CAROLINA – THE LEANDRO CASE

In North Carolina, parents in five low-wealth school districts (Cumberland, Halifax, Hoke, Robeson, and Vance) filed suit against the state in 1994. They argued their lower tax bases and smaller populations made it impossible to offer the same educational opportunities offered by public schools in wealthier districts. Wealthier school districts, including Asheville City Schools, Buncombe County Public Schools, Durham Public Schools, Wake County Schools, and Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Public Schools, plus Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, joined the lawsuit, arguing that the amount that the state pays for public schools did not adequately provide for the extra costs of educating low-wealth and exceptional children.

In July 1997, the North Carolina Supreme Court ruled that North Carolina's Constitution does not guarantee a right to equal education opportunities in every school district. In its ruling, however, the court held that all children residing in the state have a constitutional right to a "sound basic education." The court defined the type of education to which students are entitled by listing four components of a sound basic education:[8]

1. Ability to read, write and speak the English language and sufficient knowledge of mathematics and physical science.
2. Sufficient knowledge of geography, history, and basic economic and political systems.
3. Sufficient academic and vocational skills to engage in post-secondary or vocational training.
4. Sufficient academic and vocational skills to enable a student to compete on an equal basis with others in further education or future employment.

While the Leandro case mandated a basic level of education for all North Carolina students, its decision allowed counties to help finance their schools based on local property taxes, which has enabled funding disparities between low-wealth and high-wealth counties to persist and even increase.

In an effort to better address the state's constitutional obligation as it pertains to at-risk students, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) developed a Disadvantaged Student Supplemental Fund (DSSF) to provide additional resources to districts. In December 2004, NC DPI revised, and the court endorsed, a new identification model that considers several factors: the percent of public school students living in a single parent family, the percent of population age 5-17 below the poverty line, and the percent of public school students with at least one parent with less than a high school diploma.

[8] Leandro v. State Case Summary.
Available at http://law.duke.edu/childedlaw/schooldiscipline/attorneys/casesummaries/leandrovstate/.

FINANCING SCHOOL FACILITIES

Since the 1930s, school facilities have officially been the responsibility of local districts, while operating costs rested with the state. In 1993, NC DPI released a study on school facilities needs throughout the state. Surveying school districts across the state, NC DPI found a projected capital need of $5.5 billion over the next ten years.

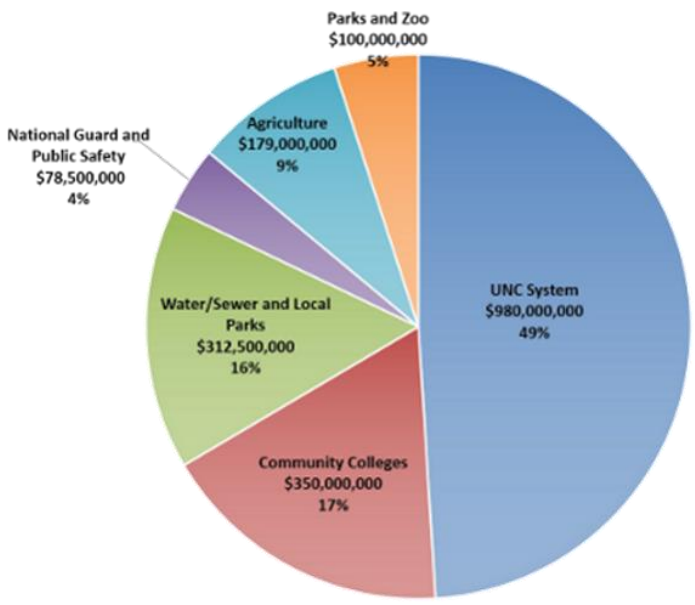
Two years later, in the 1995 legislative session, many groups, including the Low-Wealth Schools Consortium, began urging the General Assembly to consider ways to help fund school construction. The General Assembly requested that NC DPI complete another facilities survey and to include county commissioners in the capital projections. The 1996 study concluded that facility need costs had swelled to $6.2 billion over a five-year period due to increasing student populations.

The 1996 study helped prompt the General Assembly to pass the Public School Building Bond Act of 1996, at a cost of $1.8 billion dollars. The school bond money was distributed in four different ways. A certain portion of the funds were earmarked for:

1) Low-wealth systems based on level of wealth (poorer school systems receive more)
2) High-growth systems (primarily urban and suburban areas)
3) Small school systems (under 3,150 students)
4) All systems on a per capita basis

The first bonds were sold on March 17, 1997. By December 1998, 107 school districts had submitted their capital expenditure plans to the Planning Section at NC DPI for approval to build new schools or make additions or renovations. All $1.8 billion of the funds were committed by 2006. Counties and local school districts are also making an effort to meet the facility needs of their schools.

In March 2016, the $2 billion Connect NC Bond Referendum passed in the primary election.[9] This bond primarily supported the UNC System and Community Colleges, along with parks, water/sewer, agriculture, and the National Guard/public safety. No funds were earmarked for K-12 education.

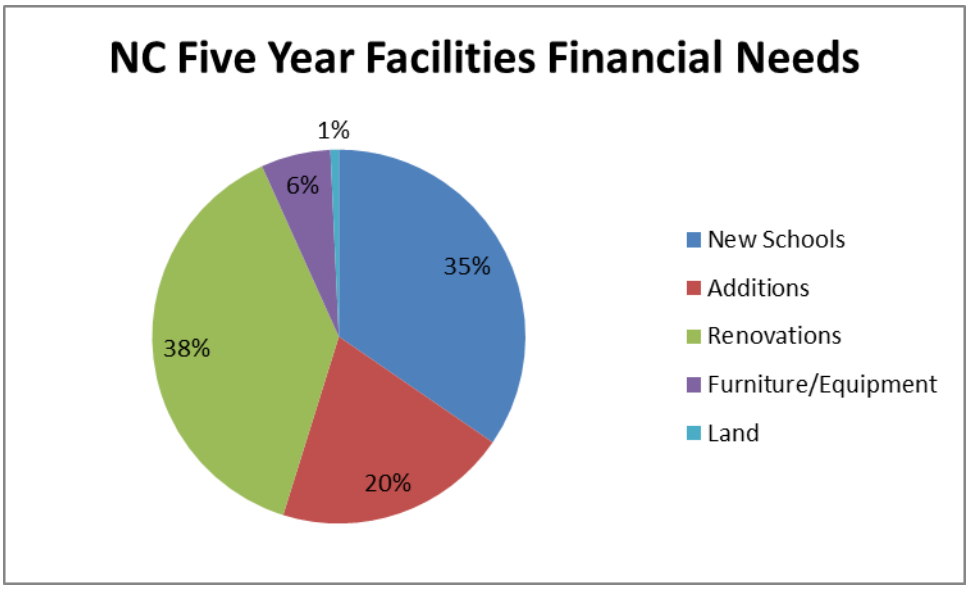


Source: Connect NC

[9] Connect NC. Available at http://connect.nc.gov/.

Facility Needs Survey

The 2015-16 NC DPI Facilities Needs Survey estimates that $8.1 billion is needed for new schools, additions, renovations, furniture and equipment, and land.[10] A breakdown of the facilities needs can be seen below.



Source: NC DPI 2015-16 Facility Needs Survey

Additional Resources for School Finance

Public School Forum of North Carolina's Local Finance Study
https://www.ncforum.org/local-school-finance-study/

NC DPI Highlights of the Budget
http://www.ncpublicschools.org/fbs/budget/

[10] NC DPI 2015-16 Facilities Needs Survey. Available at http://www.schoolclearinghouse.org/otherinf/FacilityNeedsSurvey/2015%20Facility%20Needs%20Survey%20(SBE).pdf.

STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM

KEY ISSUES

Standards outline what each student should learn by the end of each grade level. Standards in North Carolina are put in place at the state level to ensure all students will be taught the content deemed essential and necessary by the state. Standards allow teachers and parents to assess student progress.

Curriculum is made up of the methods and techniques used by teachers to explain key concepts and subject areas. Curriculum is established by teachers and local school leaders.

INTRODUCTION

In 2010, North Carolina adopted the Common Core State Standards into its Standard Course of Study for English and Math, with statewide implementation beginning in 2012-13. To complement the Common Core, North Carolina implemented the newly developed Essential Standards as the parallel Standard Course of Study in all remaining areas of study including science, social studies, information and technology, world languages, arts education, occupational course of study, healthful living, guidance, and English as a Second Language. The standards set by the Common Core and Essential Standards define the knowledge and skills students should acquire by the end of each school year from Kindergarten through 12th grade.

While they have been the topic of much debate recently, in North Carolina and nationally, Common Core and the Essential Standards do not dictate the curriculum taught by North Carolina's teachers, which consists of the methods and techniques used by teachers to explain key concepts and subject areas. Local school leaders are responsible for making decisions about the curriculum that they choose to deliver to students based on the statewide Standard Course of Study (whether it is the Common Core or something else). In addition, local schools and districts may offer electives and coursework that go above and beyond the Standard Course of Study's content standards. **Classroom instruction is a partnership between the state, which sets content standards in the Standard Course of Study, and local educators who determine which curriculum materials they will use to deliver instruction to reach standards set by the state**.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

In the past, each state set its own standards, leading to results that varied widely from state to state, and making it difficult to compare performance across states or to design assessments or materials aligned with multiple states' different standards. The Common Core grew out of a 20-year effort to design a set of standards that would be rigorous and facilitate interstate collaboration while retaining local control over curricular decisions.

The effort started with the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics publishing in 1989 what was intended to be a consensus statement of mathematics standards. The publication helped spur a period of widespread, state-led development of standards and assessments, which coincided with broad rejection of the idea of creating *national standards*. The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 required states to develop proficiency standards, but left it to each state to set its own standards. But at around the same time, international data showed the U.S. badly underperforming other countries, particularly in math, leading policymakers to become concerned that low standards were holding back students and states' economic development efforts. In response, the organization Achieve, led by governors and business leaders, sparked the American Diploma Project, an effort by 30 states to align high school graduation requirements with entrance require-

ments for colleges and work-based training programs. Through this project, state leaders discovered substantial agreement among states on what students should be able to know and do in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics.

On the heels of this work, in 2007, an alliance of state education leaders (the Council of Chief State School Officers) and the National Governors Association (NGA) issued a report calling for a "common core of internationally benchmarked standards in math and language arts for grades K-12 to ensure that students are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to be globally competitive."[1] In 2009, they invited state leaders to participate in an effort to develop common standards. Nearly every state agreed to participate (48 states). The group developed committees of educators and subject matter experts from across the country to develop standards for every grade level, K-12. By 2012, 46 states and the agency that runs schools on military bases in the U.S. and abroad had signed on and agreed to adopt the standards in their entirety, though every state retained discretion to add up to 15 percent locally developed standards.

North Carolina adopted the Common Core State Standards in 2010 as its Standard Course of Study for English language arts and mathematics and began implementation statewide in all public schools in the 2012-13 school year. The standards outline what each student should learn by the end of each grade level so that teachers and parents can assess student progress. For grades K-8, grade-by-grade standards exist in English language arts/literacy and mathematics. For grades 9-12, the standards are grouped into grade bands of 9-10 grade standards and 11-12 grade standards. Supporters of the standards argue that they are:

1. Research and evidence based
2. Clear, understandable, and consistent
3. Aligned with college and career expectations
4. Based on rigorous content and the application of knowledge through higher-order thinking skills
5. Built upon the strengths and lessons of current state standards
6. Informed by other top-performing countries to prepare all students for success in our global economy and society[2]

Opponents of Common Core argue that the standards may be too rigorous in some areas and not rigorous enough in others, or that the federal government has played too heavy-handed a role in encouraging states to adopt the standards, or in supporting two state-led consortia that have been designing Common Core-aligned assessments.

While the standards set grade-specific goals, they do not define how the standards should be taught or which materials should be used to support students. States and districts recognize that there will need to be a range of supports in place to ensure that all students, including those with special needs and English language learners, can master the standards. Even though no set of grade-specific standards can reflect the great variety of abilities, needs, learning rates, and achievement levels of students in a classroom, the standards provide checkpoints of college and career readiness for all students.

English Language Arts Standards

The standards establish guidelines for English Language Arts (ELA) as well as for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. Because students must learn to read, write, speak, listen, and use lan-

[1] Rothman, R. (2013). *Common Core State Standards 101*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education, citing National Governors Association, Council of Chief State School Officers, and Achieve (2008), *Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education*. Washington, DC: Author, p. 6.

[2] Common Core State Standards Initiative (2014), *About the Common Core State Standards*. Available at http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/

guage effectively in a variety of content areas, the standards promote the literacy skills and concepts required for college and career readiness in multiple disciplines.

The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards form the backbone of the ELA/literacy standards by articulating core knowledge and skills, while grade-specific standards provide additional specificity. Beginning in grade 6, the literacy standards allow teachers of ELA, history/social studies, science, and technical subjects to use their content area expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective fields.

In developing the English Language Arts standards, Common Core focused on a few fundamental shifts in curriculum to guide student learning. These key shifts include:

- ***Regular practice with complex texts and their academic language:*** to prepare students for the demands of college- and career-level literature and vocabulary.

- ***Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from texts, both literary and informational:*** to ensure that students are capable of answering text-dependent questions based on a specific reading, rather than a student's prior knowledge or experiences.

- ***Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction:*** to help students develop strong general knowledge and an improved vocabulary through informational nonfiction readings in history, social sciences, technical studies, and the arts.

MATHEMATICS STANDARDS

For more than a decade, research studies of mathematics education in high-performing countries have concluded that mathematics education in the United States must become substantially more focused and coherent in order to improve mathematics achievement in this country. To deliver on this promise, the mathematics standards are designed to address the problem of North Carolina's previous mathematics curriculum, which tended to be "a mile wide and an inch deep." North Carolina's math curriculum has been criticized for offering a wide and expansive overview of many various topics, at the expense of diving deeper into topics so that students can gain a deep understanding of how mathematics principles really work. Therefore, the new math standards provide clarity and specificity rather than broad general statements. The development of the standards began with research-based learning progressions detailing what is known today about how students' mathematical knowledge, skill, and understanding develop over time.

The Common Core concentrates on a clear set of math skills and concepts. Students will learn concepts in a more organized way both during the school year and across grades. The standards encourage students to solve real-world problems. The knowledge and skills students need to be prepared for mathematics in college, career, and life are woven throughout the mathematics standards. However, the mathematics standards do not include separate Anchor Standards like those used in the ELA/literacy standards.

In developing the Mathematics standards, Common Core again focused on a few fundamental shifts in curriculum to guide student learning. These key shifts include:

- ***Greater focus on fewer topics:*** to ensure that mathematics teachers cover fewer topics in greater detail rather than provide a superficial outline of all topics. The concentrations on a grade-level basis are as follows:

    - Grades K–2: Concepts, skills, and problem solving related to addition and subtraction

- Grades 3–5: Concepts, skills, and problem solving related to multiplication and division of whole numbers and fractions
- Grade 6: Ratios and proportional relationships, and early algebraic expressions and equations
- Grade 7: Ratios and proportional relationships, and arithmetic of rational numbers
- Grade 8: Linear algebra and linear functions

- ***Coherence and linking of topics across grades:*** to ensure that mathematics topics are approached as interwoven and connected concepts that can be developed further from grade to grade.

- ***Rigor:*** to pursue conceptual understanding, procedural skills and fluency, and application with equal intensity.
  - Conceptual Understanding: Students will be taught to view math from a conceptual standpoint and apply key concepts like place value and ratios across a number of different perspectives.
  - Procedural Skills and Fluency: Students will utilize speed and accuracy for calculations in order to further develop more complex skills.
  - Application: Students will be encouraged to apply mathematical concepts in real-life situations to improve problem-solving capabilities.

NORTH CAROLINA ESSENTIAL STANDARDS

North Carolina's Essential Standards constitute its Standard Course of Study for science, social studies, information and technology, world languages, arts education, occupational course of study, healthful living, guidance, and English as a Second Language. The Essential Standards were written using the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (RBT), a model for qualitative expression of different types of thinking. The RBT was chosen because it has well-defined verbs and is built on modern cognitive research that will help progress students towards the complex thinking expected of 21st Century graduates. The RBT categorizes both the **cognitive process** and the **knowledge dimension** of the standards.

1. ***Cognitive Process Dimension:***
   The cognitive process refers to the verbs used in the standard. The RBT has specific definitions for all the verbs used in its model. For example:

   a. ***Explaining*** requires constructing a cause-and-effect model of a system (e.g. explain the recent downturn in the global economy)
   b. ***Inferring*** requires drawing a logical conclusion from presented information (e.g. In learning a foreign language, infer grammatical principles from examples)

2. ***Knowledge Dimension*:**
   The knowledge dimension is a way to categorize the type of knowledge to be learned. For instance, in the standard "The student will understand the concept of equality as it applies to solving problems with unknown quantities", the knowledge to be learned is *"the concept of equality as it applies to solving problems with unknown quantities."* Knowledge in the RBT falls into four categories:

   a. ***Factual Knowledge*** of terminology; specific dates and elements
   b. ***Conceptual Knowledge*** of classifications and categories; principles and generalizations; theories, models, and structures
   c. ***Procedural Knowledge*** of subject-specific skills and algorithms; subject-specific techniques and methods; criteria for determining when to use appropriate procedures
   d. ***Meta-Cognitive Knowledge*** of strategic knowledge; knowledge about cognitive tasks; self-knowledge

ACADEMIC STANDARD REVIEW COMMISSION

In 2014, the North Carolina General Assembly passed Senate Bill 812 which created a new Academic Standards Review Commission to review the state's English Language Arts (ELA) and Math standards and propose modifications to ensure that the standards meet the following criteria:

- Increase students' level of academic achievement
- Meet and reflect North Carolina's priorities
- Are age-level and developmentally appropriate
- Are understandable to parents and teachers
- Are among the highest standards in the nation

The Academic Standards Review Commission (ASRC) was directed to submit findings to the State Board of Education and the NC General Assembly. The legislation directed the State Board of Education to consider the recommendations of the ASRC but decision-making for revising the standards was left to the State Board of Education's authority.

After 15 months of meetings, the Commission was expected to recommend changes to the standards used in North Carolina. Instead, it issued a series of suggestions for both English Language Arts (ELA) and math, after scuttling its plans for mathematics. The preliminary recommendations for math included adopting the Minnesota standards for grades K-8, and returning to the old math standards in high school (Algebra I-Geometry-Algebra II). When the changes were voted down, the ELA recommendations were revised to include math.

The preliminary recommendations were available for months before the final vote in December. Commission members met a number of times before then, but until the last day it seemed fairly certain that the preliminary recommendations would become the final recommendations. It was a surprise to many at the final meeting when the Commission's preliminary math recommendations were voted down.[3]

The ASRC submitted their final report on December 31, 2015.[4]

In March 2016, the State Board of Education heard an overview of the history and process for evaluating and revising the academic standards of the state.[5]

In May 2016, NC DPI announced that it was seeking public feedback on high school math standards. NC DPI reviews the state's standard course of study on a five-year cycle per subject and mathematics is currently under review. As proposed, the changes could go into effect as early as the fall of 2016. According to a NC DPI press release in May 2016, action could occur at the June 2016 meeting of the State Board of Education.[6]

For more information on North Carolina's Standard Course of Study visit
http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/curriculum/.

For more information on the Common Core State Standards visit http://www.corestandards.org/.

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[3] Granados, A., Controversy rages over Common Core Commission recommendations.
Available at https://www.ednc.org/2016/01/06/controversy-rages-over-common-core-commission-recommendations/.
[4] The North Carolina Academic Standards Review Commission Report of Findings and Recommendations. Available at http://3e9eq82l8dmn2cmrkf23oogn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/NC-Academic-Standard-Review-Commission.pdf.
[5] Monthly Meeting of the North Carolina State Board of Education, 3/3/2016.
Available at https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/ViewMeetingOrder.aspx?S=10399&MID=2320.
[6] NC DPI, Public Feedback Sought on High School Mathematics Standards.
Available at http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/newsroom/news/2015-16/20160504-01.

ACCOUNTABILITY

KEY ISSUES

North Carolina's accountability methods are designed to support every student in meeting college and career ready expectations. Teachers, students, and schools are all held accountable for the growth and achievement of students.

Developing accountability measures that accurately reflect student performance and the successes of schools and teachers has been an ongoing challenge. North Carolina's current accountability system was developed through several revisions and after a great deal of effort to understand how best to hold schools accountable, support ongoing improvement, and present information that parents can easily understand.

North Carolina recently adopted a school performance grade accountability model, assigning A-F grades to each school in the state based on a calculation combining student achievement and student growth. The formula for calculating the grades, as well as the grades themselves, has been the topic of much debate.

OVERVIEW

Since North Carolina began to earnestly focus on accountability in 1989, state systems for holding students, schools, and teachers accountable have gone through several iterations.

Measurement and assessment are important components of accountability. Assessments can be "summative," occurring at the ends of grades or courses to capture what students have learned. Or they can be "formative," meaning they are used in the short-term to influence what teachers teach and students learn, sometimes week-to-week, day-to-day, or even moment-to-moment. North Carolina is in the process of developing technology-based platforms that will track student performance and assist teachers and schools in targeting student needs more efficiently. Streamlined information will make accountability clearer and simpler, but it may also improve teaching and learning.

The way accountability measures are shared with the public is another important part of the state's accountability plan. Parents and communities need access to clear and understandable information about the performance of schools, teachers, and students. As policymakers pursue information-sharing as a public ideal, they must also take into account the need for fair and accurate information about performance, and the impact that public transparency may have on the ability of schools to improve and serve students well.

Current accountability standards prohibit schools from 'social promotion' at the end of third-grade, requiring through the state's Read to Achieve program that every student can read at grade level by the end of third grade before moving to fourth grade. At all grade levels, the issue of how to support struggling students so they can progress to more advanced work is something policymakers and educators must continually address.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE GRADES: SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY MODEL

The Excellent Public Schools Act, enacted by the General Assembly in 2012, included among its provisions a new policy to assign school performance grades to every public school in North Carolina.[1] The first school performance grades of A, B, C, D or F were released in February 2015 based on data from the 2013-14 school year.

The original legislation called for the first year of the school performance grades to be calculated on a 15 point grading scale (A = 85, B = 70, C = 55, D = 40, F = less than 40) and then move to a 10 point scale in subsequent years. Legislation passed in 2014 enabled the 15 point scale to remain for the 2014-15 school performance grades released in September 2015; however, without additional legislation in the 2016 session, the scale will move to 10 points starting with the 2015-16 grades.

As of 2015, North Carolina was one of 15 states nationally and one of eight states in the Southeast to have adopted an A-F grading system. Supporters of these systems say that they hold schools and districts accountable for results, provide parents with an understandable marker of performance, and encourage school improvement efforts. Common complaints include that many A-F grade systems inadequately account for student growth and other important measures of school quality, and that they create incentives for schools to serve students on the borderline at the expense of the lowest- and highest-performing students. In some states, the grading scales and underlying criteria have changed over time, resulting in confusion, inconsistency, and charges of political gamesmanship. Additionally, critics of A-F grading say that the letter grades are too often used to criticize and punish failing schools rather than to target resources and assistance to schools and students that need it most.[2]

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE GRADE INDICATORS

Elementary/Middle Schools:	High Schools:
EOG Mathematics	Math I EOC
EOG English/Language Arts/Reading	English II EOC
EOG Science	Biology EOC
Math/ELA/Science EOCs (middle schools)	Math Course Rigor
	Graduation Rate
	ACT
	ACT WorkKeys

EOG: End-Of-Grade Test
EOC: End-Of –Course Test

Schools Performance Grades are based on two components: a School Achievement Score and a School Growth Score. A combination of the School Achievement Score and the School Growth Score make up the overall School Performance Grade. Currently, 80% of the School Performance Grade is the School Achievement Score and 20% of the grade is the School Growth Score. Deliberations in the General Assembly have been underway for the past three years re-evaluating the weight given to each of these components.

[1] § 115C-83.15. School achievement, growth, performance scores, and grades. Available at http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_115C/GS_115C-83.15.pdf.
[2] Public School Forum of NC, Top 10 Education Issues 2015. Available at https://www.ncforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/PSF_TopTenEducationIssues_v5_web.pdf.

School Achievement Score. Schools earn one point for each school-wide percent of:

- Students who score at or above proficient on annual assessments for mathematics in grades three through eight.
- Students who score at or above proficient on annual assessments for reading in grades three through eight.
- Students who score at or above proficient on annual assessments for science in grades five and eight.
- Students who score at or above proficient on the Algebra I or Integrated Math I end-of-course test.
- Students who score at or above proficient on the English II end-of-course test.
- Students who score at or above proficient on the Biology end-of-course test.
- Students who complete Algebra II or Integrated Math III with a passing grade.
- Students who achieve the minimum score required for admission into a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina on a nationally normed test of college readiness.
- Students enrolled in Career and Technical Education courses who meet the standard when scoring at Silver, Gold, or Platinum levels on a nationally normed test of workplace readiness.
- Students who graduate within four years of entering high school.

The total points are then converted to a 100-point scale.

School Growth Score. Using EVAAS (SAS® EVAAS™ (Education Value-Added Assessment System) for K-12 is a customized software system available to all North Carolina school districts. EVAAS provides North Carolina's educators with tools to improve student learning and to reflect and improve on their own effectiveness.), the overall growth score earned by schools is calculated. Growth is calculated by weighting achievement indicators used to calculate the School Performance Grade, but only those indicators with growth values (End of Grade and End of Course test scores) through EVAAS are included. The numerical values used to determine whether a school has met, exceeded, or has not met expected growth shall be translated to a 100-point scale.

Many other states place a greater emphasis than we do on growth while deemphasizing achievement. The reason for this is simple: school achievement scores reflect single point-in-time test results, over which schools have far less control than growth, which is designed to measure the impact schools and teachers have on students' academic progress.[3]

[3] Ableidinger, J., A is for Affluent. Available at https://www.ncforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/A-is-for-Affluent-Issue-Brief-Format.pdf.

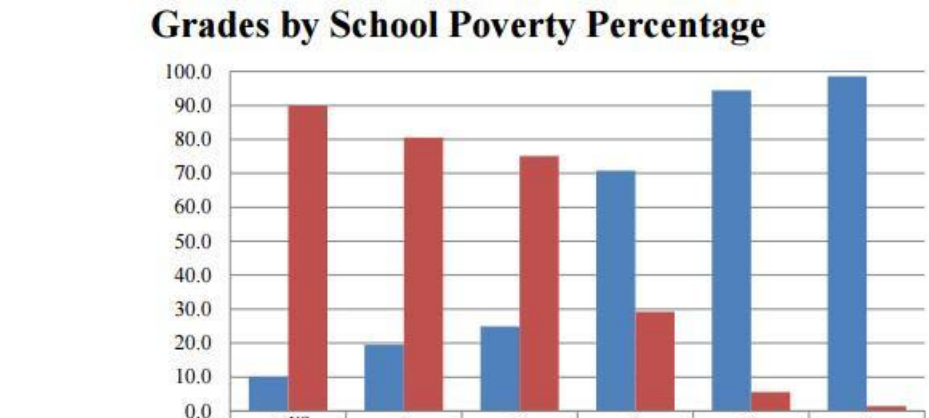
ADDITIONAL REPORTING

- Growth is reported separately for each school: exceeds, meets, or does not meet expected growth
- A separate achievement score for math and reading is reported for schools serving grades K-8
- The report card that shares the school performance grade for schools serving 3rd graders contains information on the number and percentage of third graders who are retained or promoted based on reading performance

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE GRADES AND POVERTY

An analysis of North Carolina's 2013-14 school performance grades by Duke University's Will Wilson revealed a 61 percent correlation between a school's free and reduced-price lunch population and its achievement score. By contrast, Wilson found only a two percent correlation between that same measure and a school's growth score.[4]

In 2014-15, for schools with at least half of their students living in poverty ("high-poverty schools"), only 11 percent received A's or B's, compared with 63 percent of all other schools. At the other end of the performance spectrum, 42 percent of high-poverty schools received D's or F's, compared with only 3.6 percent of all other schools. In the entire state, only two schools with less than half of their students living in poverty received F's, compared with 143 high-poverty schools.[5]



	A+NG	A	B	C	D	F
50% or More Poverty	10.1	19.5	24.9	70.8	94.4	98.6
Less than 50% Poverty	89.9	80.5	75.1	29.2	5.6	1.4

Source: NC DPI, 2014–15 Performance and Growth of North Carolina Public Schools Executive Summary

THE READY INITIATIVE

The READY initiative, launched in fall 2012 by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, is North Carolina's comprehensive accountability system. READY is an alignment of educational standards, assessments, and accountability methods designed to meet college and career ready expectations for every

[4] Meyer,G., Common ground on school grades: We need to grade our schools, but we need to grade them differently. Available at https://www.ednc.org/2015/03/18/common-ground-on-school-grades-we-need-to-grade-our-schools-but-we-need-to-grade-them-differently/.

[5] NC DPI, 2014–15 Performance and Growth of North Carolina Public Schools Executive Summary. Available at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/reporting/exsumm15.pdf.

student. Born out of the ABCs accountability program, READY is North Carolina's new brand of school accountability.

READY is not an acronym, but a goal statement for all students to be career and college ready. The components of the READY initiative include:

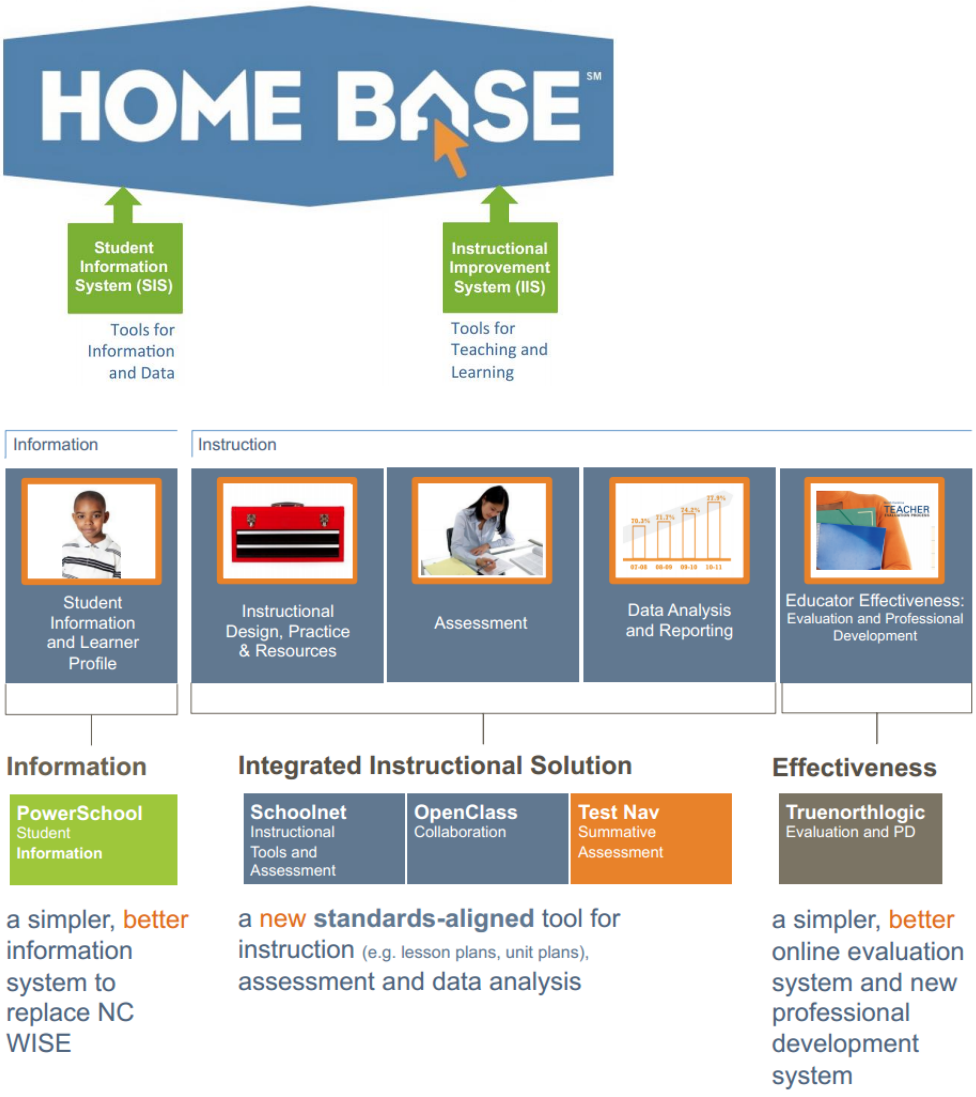
- Common Core State Standards and Essential Standards;
- A new state accountability model;
- Additional professional development support for principals and teachers;
- New uses of technology to support learning; and,
- An enhanced teacher and principal evaluation model.

Together, these encompass our state's **READY** initiative.

HOME BASE

Home Base is the technology platform on which READY is built. Home Base is a statewide, instructional improvement (IIS) and student information system (SIS) for teachers, students, parents and administrators. Teachers use Home Base to access student data, as well as teaching and learning resources. Students can access their schoolwork, grades, and learning activities. Parents are able to view their child's attendance and progress, and administrators can monitor data on students, teachers and schools. Home Base allows for single sign-on access to the integrated system made up of the following components: Learner Profile and Student Information; Standards & Curriculum; Instructional Design; Practice & Resources; Assessment; Data Analysis and Reporting; and Professional Development & Educator Evaluation.

Home Base is a new technology platform for North Carolina, introduced in 2013-14 school year. Prior to Home Base, North Carolina public schools used a technology system called NC WISE for data collection and monitoring.


HOME BASE SM
Student Information System (SIS)
Tools for Information and Data
Instructional Improvement System (IIS)
Tools for Teaching and Learning
Information
Instruction
Student Information and Learner Profile
Instructional Design, Practice & Resources
Assessment
Data Analysis and Reporting
Educator Effectiveness: Evaluation and Professional Development
Information
PowerSchool Student Information
a simpler, better information system to replace NC WISE
Integrated Instructional Solution
Schoolnet Instructional Tools and Assessment
OpenClass Collaboration
Test Nav Summative Assessment
a new standards-aligned tool for instruction (e.g. lesson plans, unit plans), assessment and data analysis
Effectiveness
Truenorthlogic Evaluation and PD
a simpler, better online evaluation system and new professional development system

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

KEY ISSUES

The collection of student performance data is the state's way of ensuring accountability in students, teachers, and the education system as a whole.

North Carolina has posted dramatic student performance gains in recent years on many national and international standardized tests. However, there is much room for growth.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP)

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a congressionally mandated project led by the National Center for Education Statistics for more than twenty-five years. NAEP periodically measures student achievement in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography, and other subjects. Beginning in 1990, state-level NAEP comparison data became available for states that volunteered to participate. Since 1980, some type of assessment has been done every two years, though the subjects tested vary from year to year.

In the 1990s, the National Education Goals Panel recognized North Carolina and Texas for making more progress toward achieving the national education goals than any other states. North Carolina and Texas led all states in combined gains in math and reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress from 1990-96. Both 4th and 8th grade math scores show that North Carolina made the most gains of any state in both grades throughout the 1990s. North Carolina has been recognized in the past for the progress that its students have made on NAEP.

As part of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, Congress mandated that all states participate in NAEP reading and math assessments every two years as a way to validate state scores, but permits states to use their own assessments to measure student performance and progress. The 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act, which replaced NCLB as the newest version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization, keeps the NAEP requirement in place.

RESULTS OF NAEP TESTING 2015: MATHEMATICS

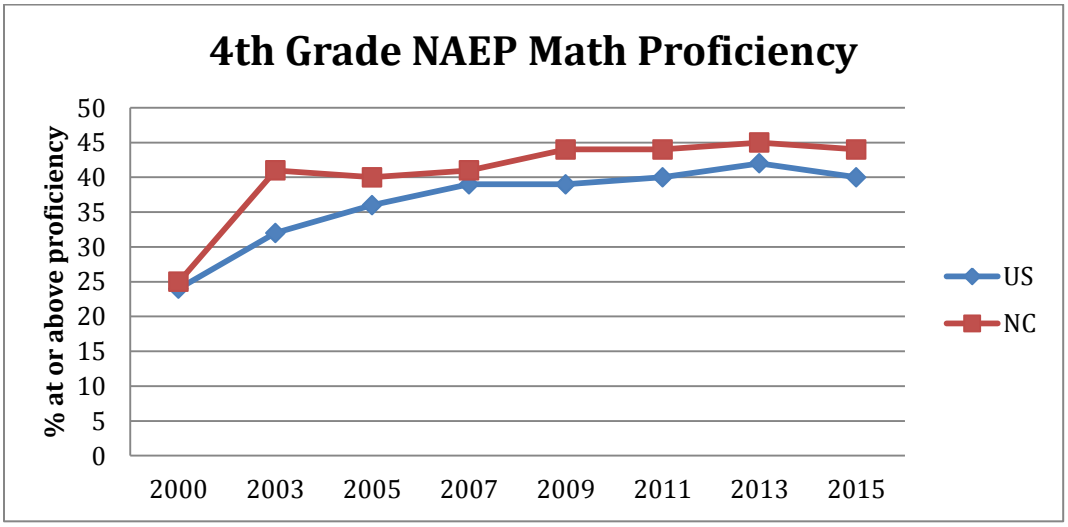
Nationally, NAEP results fell from 2013 to 2015, with no score increases in any student group on either the 4th or 8th grade math assessments.[1] North Carolina's 4th grade math average scale score remained above the national average, as it has since 2000. The average scale score for 8th grade math fell to the national average for the first time since 2000.

NAEP assesses mathematics in five content areas: number properties and operations; measurement; geometry; data analysis, statistics, and probability; and algebra. NAEP also tests students for literacy and reading abilities.

[1] The Nation's Report Card, 2015 Mathematics National Results Overview. Available at http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_2015/#mathematics?grade=4.

FOURTH GRADE MATHEMATICS: 2015 RESULTS

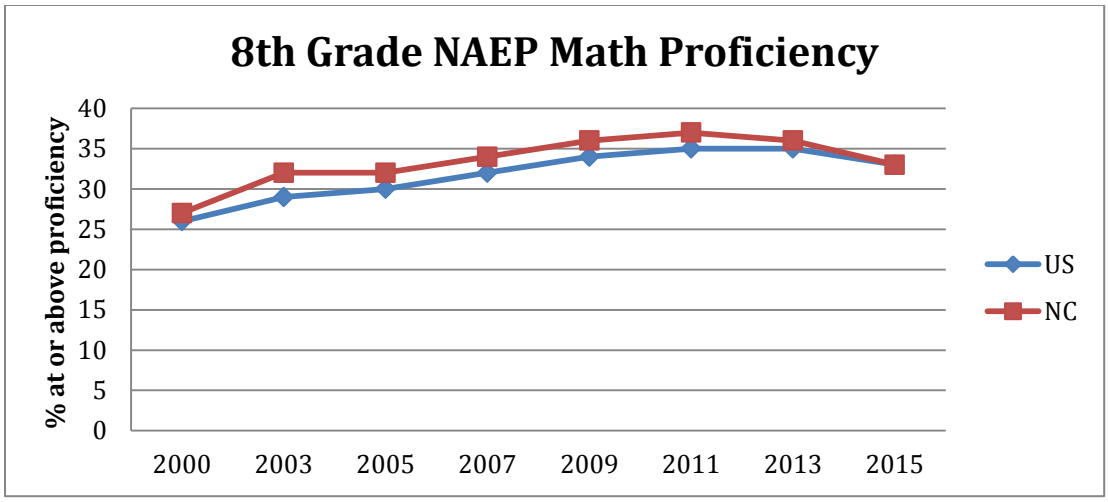
- North Carolina's average mathematics score for 4th graders was 244, compared to the national average of 240.
- North Carolina's average 4th grade mathematics score was higher than 25 other states and the District of Columbia, lower than 5 other states, and not statistically different from 19 other states.
- 41 percent of North Carolina 4th graders scored at the Basic achievement level; 36 percent at the Proficient level; and 8 percent at the Advanced achievement level.
- Between 1992 and 2015, the percentage of 4th graders in NC scoring below Basic level in mathematics decreased from 50 percent to 15 percent. However, between 2013 and 2015, the percentage increased from 13 percent to 15 percent.[2]



EIGHTH GRADE MATHEMATICS: 2015 RESULTS

- North Carolina's average mathematics score for 8th graders was 281, the same as the national average score.
- North Carolina's average 8th grade mathematics score was higher than 11 other states and the District of Columbia, lower than 15 other states, and not statistically different from 23 other states.
- 36 percent of North Carolina 8th graders scored at the Basic achievement level; 24 percent at the Proficient level; and 9 percent at the Advanced achievement level.
- Between 1990 and 2015, the percentage of 8th graders in NC scoring below Basic level in mathematics decreased from 62 percent to 31 percent. However, from 2013 to 2015, the percentage increased from 25 percent to 31 percent.[3]

[2] National Center for Education Statistics, 2015 Mathematics State Snapshot Report North Carolina. Available at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/Default.aspx.
[3] National Center for Education Statistics, 2015 Mathematics State Snapshot Report North Carolina.

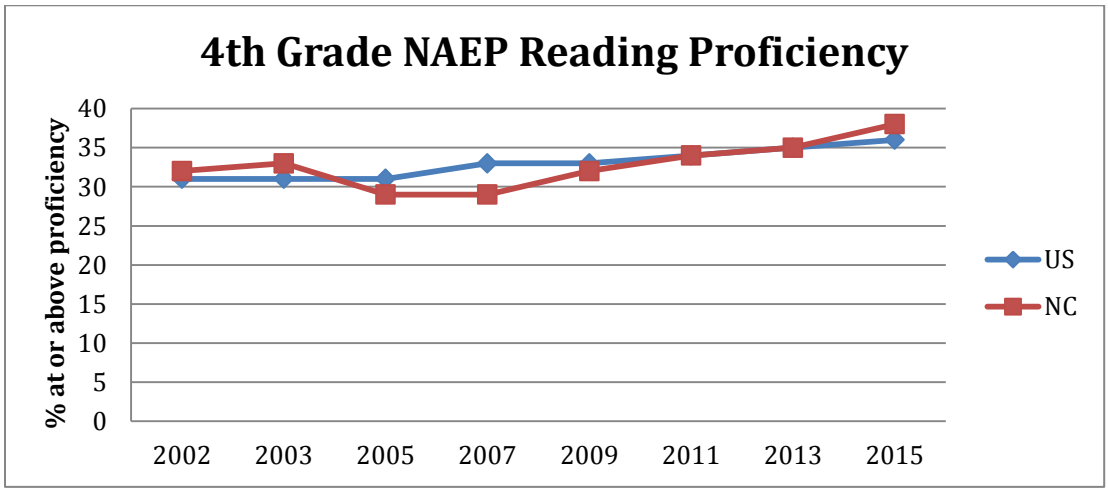


Results Of NAEP Testing 2015: Reading

In 2015, the national average reading score for fourth-grade students was not significantly different in comparison to 2013; however, eighth-grade students scored lower than 2013 in reading scores.[4]

Fourth Grade Reading: 2015 Results

- In 2015, the average score of 4th grade students in North Carolina was 226. This was higher than the average score of 221 for public school students in the nation.
- The average score for students in North Carolina in 2015 (226) was higher than their average score in 2013 (222) and in 1998 (213).
- The percentage of students in North Carolina who performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level was 38 percent in 2015. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2013 (35 percent) and was greater than that in 1998 (27 percent).[5]

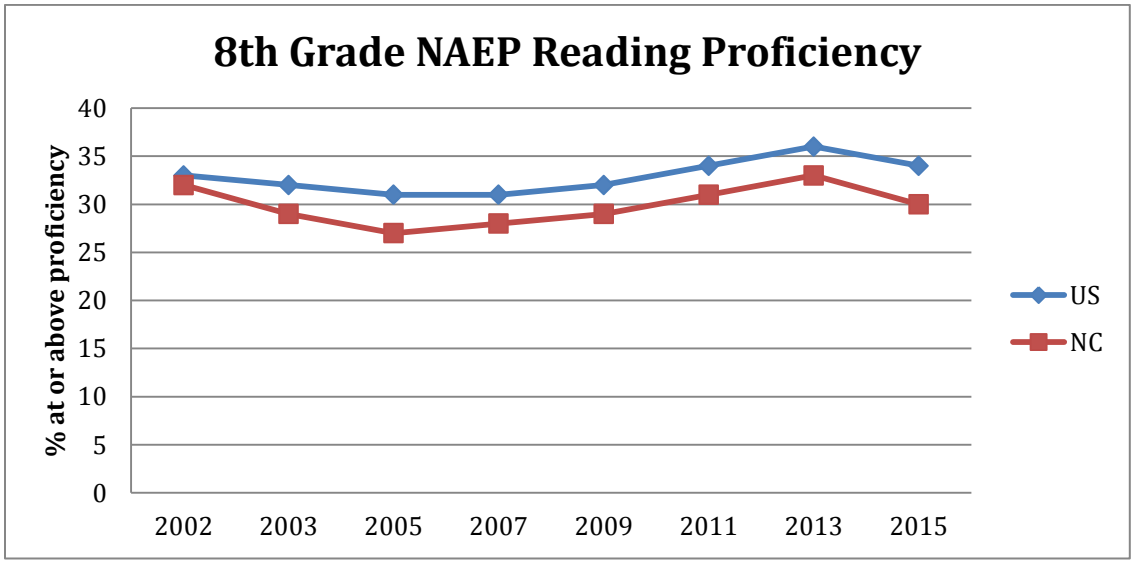


[4] The Nation's Report Card, 2015 Reading National Results Overview. Available at http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_2015/#reading?grade=4.

[5] National Center for Education Statistics, 2015 Reading State Snapshot Report North Carolina. Available at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/Default.aspx.

EIGHTH GRADE READING: 2015 RESULTS

- In 2015, the average score of 8th students in North Carolina was 261. This was lower than the average score of 264 for public school students in the nation.
- The average score for students in North Carolina in 2015 (261) was lower than their average score in 2013 (265) and was not significantly different from their average score in 1998 (262).
- The percentage of students in North Carolina who performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level was 30 percent in 2015. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2013 (33 percent) and in 1998 (30 percent).[6]



SCHOLASTIC ASSESSMENT TEST (SAT)

One of the most often used comparisons of a high school student's performance is the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT). Offered several times during the year, the test is designed to measure verbal and mathematical reasoning skills and is used to predict success during the first year of college. Only college-bound students - not all high school graduates - generally take this test. However, participation rates among (and within) states vary widely, ranging from a low of 3 percent to a high of 100 percent. In North Carolina, 59% of eligible students took the SAT in 2014-15 compared to the U.S. rate of 52.3%.[7] If only the very highest performing students take the test, a state's overall scores are likely to be much higher than a state where the majority of high school graduates take the test. Because these variations create large biases in SAT score data, the scores can cause misperceptions about variations in state educational quality. Thus, the use of SAT scores for state-by-state comparisons is controversial. In fact, the College Board no longer publishes state rankings, in order to discourage drawing ill-fitting comparisons between states. The SAT has evolved greatly since its initial administration in the late 1920s. Prior to March 2016, the SAT was composed of three subsections (critical reading, mathematics, and writing), each worth 800 points for a total possible SAT score of 2400.

[6] National Center for Education Statistics, 2015 Reading State Snapshot Report North Carolina.
[7] NC DPI, 2015 SAT Performance by District and School.
Available at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/sat/2015.

2016 Redesigned SAT

In March 2016, the College Board issued a newly redesigned SAT. The new SAT consists of three sections: Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, Math, and an Optional Essay. The exam will be returned to its original grading scale of up to 1600 total points. The Reading and Writing section and the Math section will be graded on a scale of 200-800 with the Essay section graded completely separately. The redesigned SAT is focused on eight key changes to promote a higher level of career and college readiness:

1. Relevant Words in Context
2. Command of Evidence
3. Essay Analyzing a Source
4. Math Focused on Three Key Areas (Problem Solving and Data Analysis, the Heart of Algebra, and Passport to Advanced Math)
5. Problems Grounded in Real-World Contexts
6. Analysis in Science and Social Studies
7. Founding Documents and Great Global Conversation
8. No Penalty for Wrong Answers

SAT Performance In 2014-15

- 59 percent of North Carolina's students took the SAT, a decrease of 9 percentage points from 2012. This decrease may be due to the new requirement in 2012 that all high school juniors take the ACT.
- North Carolina's mean total SAT score in 2014-15 was 1478, compared to a national mean score of 1490.[8] These numbers include public and nonpublic students.
- From 1989 to 2014, North Carolina's average yearly score gain has been about 2.52 points, compared with about 0.15 points for the nation.[9]

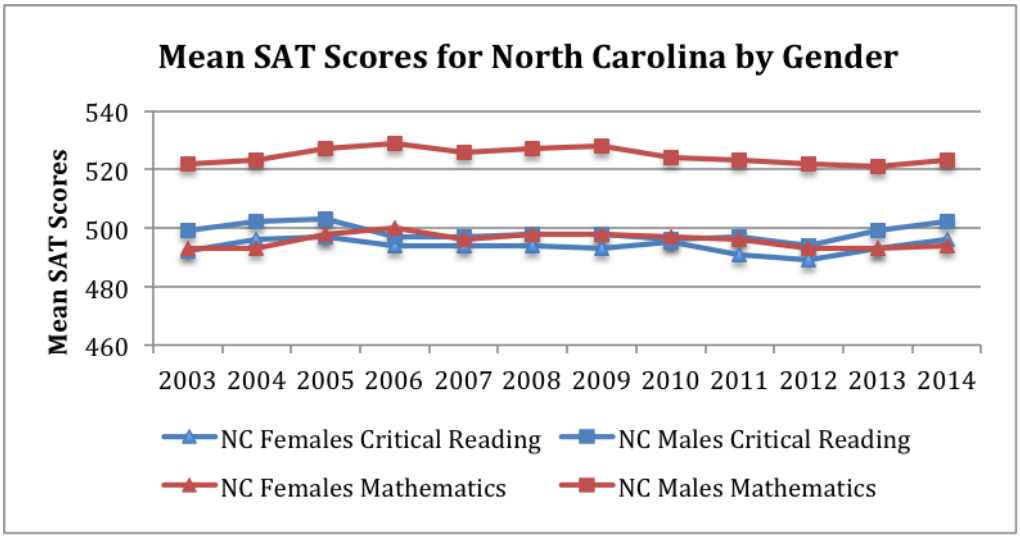
Past SAT scores show that race and gender are relevant variables to analyzing SAT performance. The data below suggests the influence of such factors on student performance in North Carolina and across the nation.

SAT & Gender

The figure below displays the ongoing gender gap in SAT scores. Males have scored higher than females on the mathematics subsection of the SAT since its first administration in the 1920s, and in recent decades males have begun to consistently score higher than females in critical reading as well.

- In 2014, the gap between total mean SAT scores for the nation's males and females (35 points) narrowed by 8 points from the gap (43 points) in 2003.
- The gap between NC's males and females (35 points) and the nation's males and females decreased by one point from 2003 to 2014.

[8] NC DPI, 2015 SAT Performance by District and School.
[9] NC DPI, North Carolina 2014 SAT Report.
Available at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/reporting/sat/2014/satreport14.pdf.



Source: NC DPI, North Carolina 2014 SAT Report

SAT & Race

White and Asian American students have historically attained higher SAT scores than other racial/ethnic groups in North Carolina, including Hispanic, American Indian and Black students. For the eighth consecutive year in North Carolina, Asian American students scored higher than other racial/ethnic groups, followed by White, Hispanic, American Indian, and Black students.

2014 Mean Reading & Math SAT Score by Race/Ethnicity

Asian American	1117
White	1066
Hispanic	954
American Indian	934
Black	856

Source: NC DPI, North Carolina 2014 SAT Report.

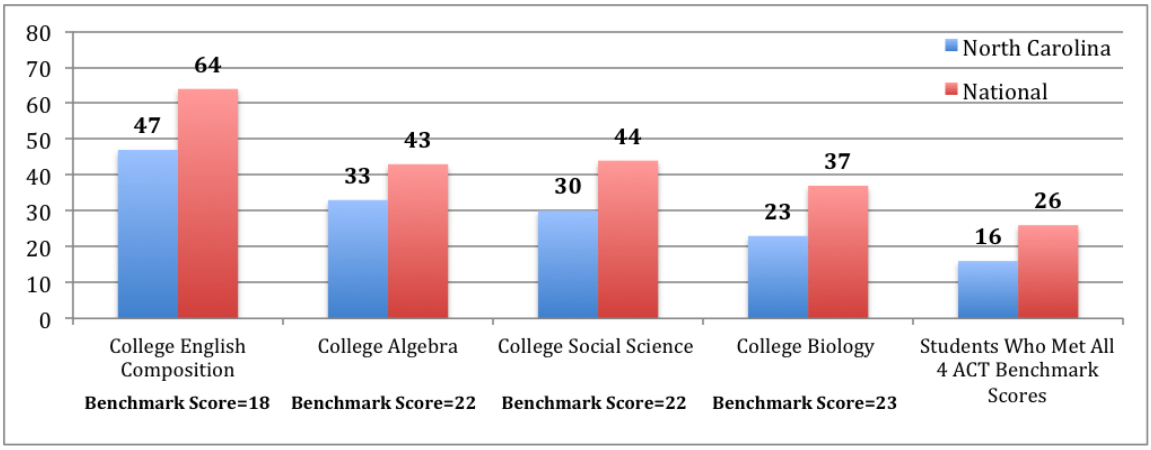
American College Testing (ACT)

Beginning in 2012-13, the ACT College Admissions Assessment is given to all public school students in the 11th grade. The ACT test measures what students have learned in their courses and measures their skills in English, math, science and reading. The ACT also has an optional writing section, in which students formulate an essay in response to a written prompt.

The ACT is scored on a scale of 1-36 in each of the four sections. A student's composite score is calculated by averaging that student's scores on each individual section. The benchmark scores are 18 for English, 22 for Mathematics, 22 for Reading, and 23 for Science. To assess college readiness, the ACT tests English composition with the English section, algebra with the mathematics section, social sciences with the reading section, and biology with the science section. The graph below shows the percentage of students who met benchmark scores in each subject area on both a state and national level.

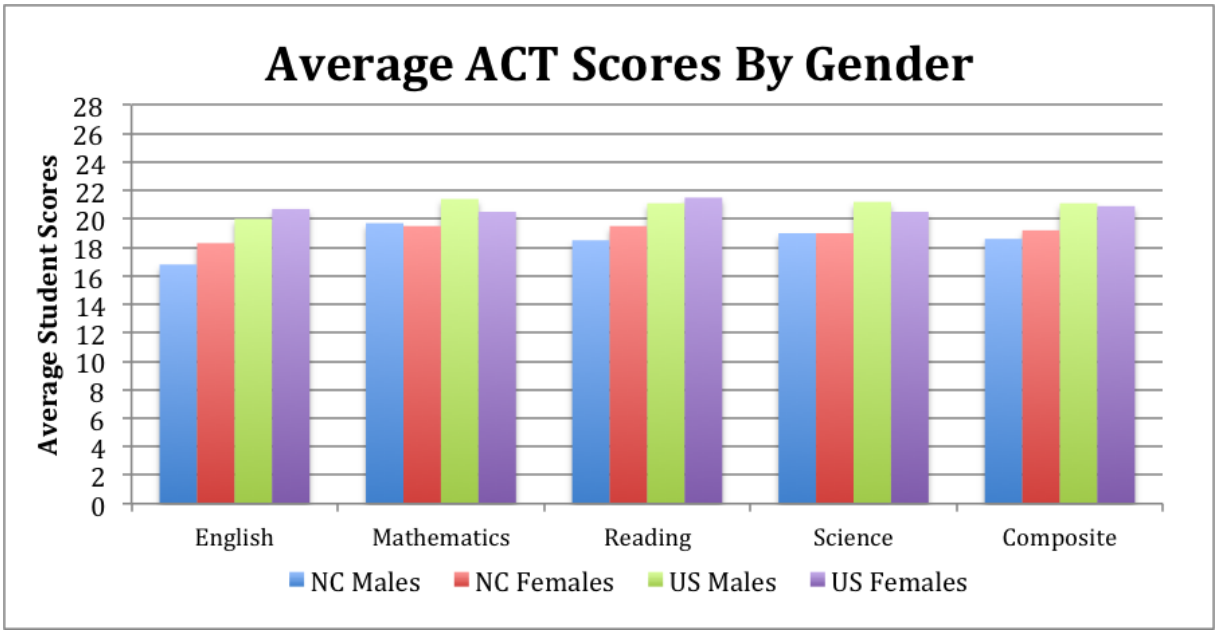
Percent of Students Ready for College-level Coursework[10]

Between 2012 and 2014, the percentage of students that met all four ACT benchmark scores in North Carolina dropped significantly from 30 percent in 2012 to 16 percent in 2014. However, this variance is due largely to the drastic increase in the number of students taking the test. In 2012, only 18,817 NC students took the ACT. However, with the new legislation requiring all 11th graders to take the ACT, 97,443 students took the ACT in 2014.



ACT & Gender

The graph below shows the average ACT scores by gender for each individual section of the ACT on both a state and national level. On average, North Carolina females scored higher than North Carolina males. The only section in which NC males scored higher than NC females was in mathematics. On a national level, females and males held the same average composite score.



[10] ACT, NC Profile. Available at https://www.act.org/newsroom/data/2014/pdf/profile/NorthCarolina.pdf.

AVERAGE ACT COMPOSITE SCORES BY RACE/ETHNICITY

The chart below shows the average ACT composite scores of NC students who took the ACT in terms of race.

Race/Ethnicity	**Composite Score**
Asian	21.4
White	20.5
Two or More Races	18.7
Prefer Not/No Response	18.3
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	17.8
Hispanic/Latino	17.2
American Indian/Alaskan Native	16.5
Black/African American	15.8

ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES

An Advanced Placement (AP) course is a class which a student takes while still in high school that can potentially earn him/her college credit. Students scoring a 3 or higher out of a possible 5 on the AP exam typically earn credit towards college. Courses offer different levels of credit. For example, students enrolling in "AB" Calculus can earn 3 hours of college credit, while the "BC" course has the potential for 6 hours of credit. Below is an overview of AP exams taken by students in North Carolina and across the nation.

The percentage of students that take AP exams differs widely across states, and the numbers also vary based on the type of AP exam taken. As with SAT scores, these variances make it difficult to meaningfully compare scores across states, or to compare state scores with regional or national averages. In states where only college-bound seniors take AP exams, for example, one would expect to see higher average score results. In other states, where larger percentages of students are encouraged to take AP exams, average scores will likely be lower. The following chart compares the numbers of students taking AP exams in 2015 and their mean scores, in North Carolina and across the nation. Scores varied widely depending on the test so it is difficult to offer blanket observations on whether North Carolina is preparing students as well as other states to perform well on AP exams.

Advanced Placement Course Examination Scores 2015

AP Course	**NC**	**US**	**NC**	**US**
	# of students taking exam	# of students taking exam	Mean Score	Mean Score
Art History	635	22,691	2.52	2.75
Biology	6,386	217,564	2.86	2.90
Calculus AB	8,012	289,507	2.51	2.83
Calculus BC	34,228	107,371	3.42	3.72
Chemistry	3,657	144,412	2.53	2.62
Chinese Language and Culture	113	9,366	4.21	4.28
Computer Science	1,198	46,344	2.56	3.07
Economics: Macro	987	117,563	2.97	2.73
Economics: Micro	1,012	67,387	3.00	3.10
English Language and Composition	15,896	519,338	2.72	2.79
English Literature and Composition	12,672	393,722	2.69	2.78

Environmental Science	12,261	136,975	2.59	2.58
European History	2,735	105,481	2.47	2.74
French Language and Culture	433	20,678	3.30	3.22
German Language and Culture	125	4,671	3.45	3.33
Government and Politics: Comparative	707	20,289	2.80	2.84
Government and Politics: U.S.	6,683	281,458	2.53	2.54
Human Geography	6,006	157,451	2.91	2.68
Italian Language and Culture	9	2,428	4.11	3.13
Japanese Language and Culture	34	2,139	3.00	3.58
Latin	240	6,540	2.73	2.98
Music History	725	18,374	2.91	3.02
Physics B	1550	17,758	2.53	2.69
Physics C: Elec. & Magnet	271	20,110	3.26	3.35
Physics C: Mechanics	616	48,207	3.70	3.50
Psychology	14,582	269,190	2.80	3.11
Spanish Language	1,600	142,723	3.83	3.78
Spanish Literature and Composition	173	20,815	3.64	3.07
Statistics	9,224	188,481	2.60	2.79
Studio Art: 2-D Design	690	27,134	3.24	3.36
Studio Art: 3-D Design	67	4,500	3.12	3.16
Studio Art: Drawing	390	17,404	3.40	3.27
U.S. History	18,690	465,989	2.52	2.64
World History	5,932	261,912	2.65	2.61

Source: College Board. Available at http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/home.

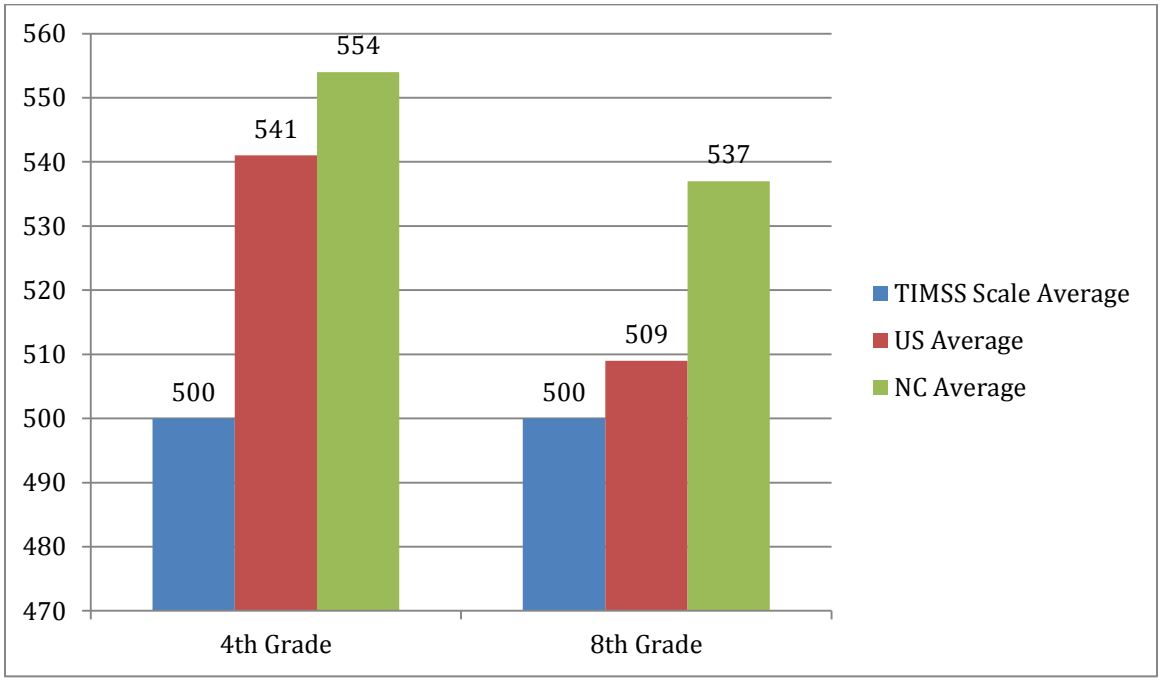
INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS: TIMSS

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), a mathematics and science achievement comparison test, has been conducted since 1995 by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), an international organization consisting of national research institutions and governmental research agencies. TIMSS can be used to track changes in achievement over time. Moreover, TIMSS results provide an indication of the degree to which students have learned key mathematics and science concepts. North Carolina is one of nine states that participate in TIMSS separately from the nation, which allows for comparison of the state's students directly to students internationally.

In the following pages, the most recently released data from the 2011 TIMSS report is provided, allowing for a more thorough look into North Carolina's performance.

Performance in Mathematics

Average Mathematics Scores Of U.S. 4th and 8th Graders 2011



Other findings included:

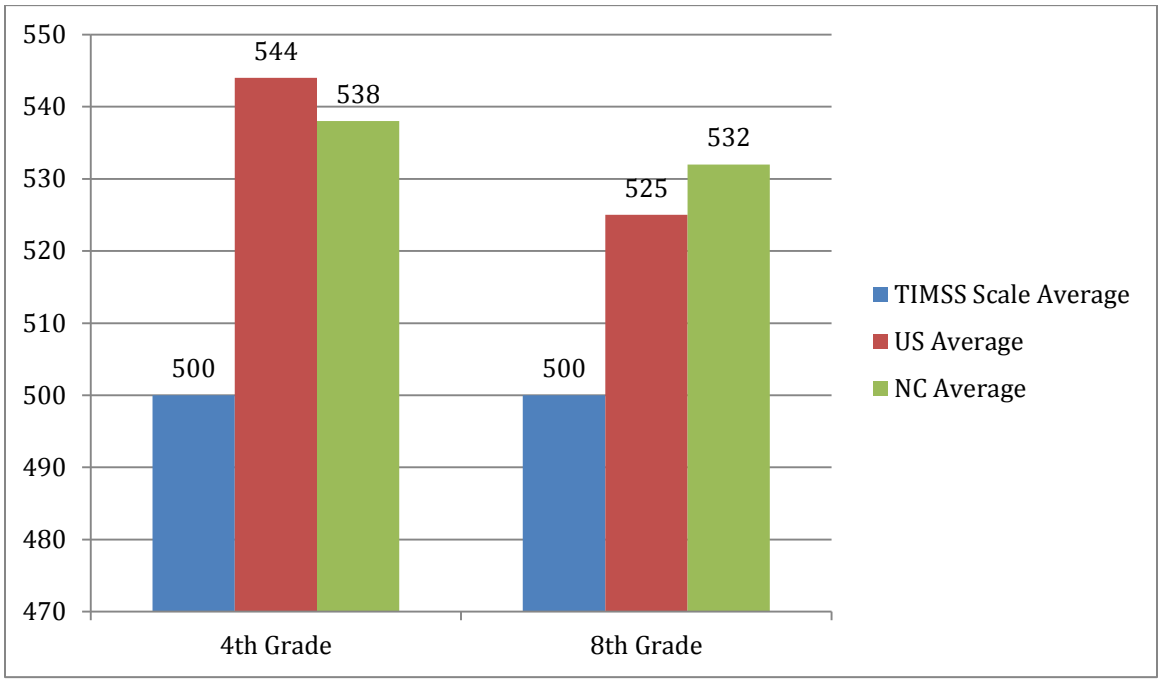
- The average mathematics scores for both U.S. fourth and eighth-grade students were higher in 2011 than they were in 2007 as compared to the TIMSS scale average.
- In 2011, 13 percent of U.S. fourth graders and 7 percent of U.S. eighth graders scored at or above the TIMSS benchmark in mathematics.
- U.S. eighth grade students in public schools containing at least 50 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch scored lower than the 2011 US national average and the TIMSS scale average in mathematics.[11]

Performance in Science

- In 2011, the average science scores of both U.S. fourth graders (544) and eighth graders (525) were higher than the TIMSS scale average (500 at both grades).
- The average science scores for both U.S. fourth and eighth-grade students in 2011 were not measurably different from 2007 scores.

[11] 2011 TIMSS Results. Available at http://nces.ed.gov/timss/results11.asp.

AVERAGE SCIENCE SCORES OF U.S. 4TH AND 8TH GRADERS 2011



HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION RATES

Another method for analyzing high school achievement is to examine the high school completion rate, or how many ninth graders that enter high school in a given year graduate four years later. The graduation rate is different from the dropout rate because the graduation rate tracks students by cohort. For example, a student with a disability entering ninth grade may not graduate with the cohort s/he entered high school with, but may graduate one or two years later. S/he would detract from the graduation rate of their cohort but s/he is not a dropout. Despite unique cases like these, the graduation rate is a useful metric for judging how well our school systems are serving children in North Carolina.

In the 2014-15 school year, 94,544 students graduated out of the cohort of 110,473 students that entered 9th grade together in 2011-12. The graduation rate, at 85.6 percent, is the highest in state history. In 2007-08, the graduation rate stood at 70.3 percent.

The following chart shows graduation numbers and percentages for four-year graduation rate by student subgroup. As is the case nationwide, North Carolina data shows that female students, Asian and white students, and English-speaking students are more likely to complete high school in four years than male, minority, disabled, and economically disadvantaged students, and those with limited English proficiency.

NORTH CAROLINA FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE, 2014-15

Subgroup	Students entering 9th grade in 2011-2012	Students graduating in 2014- 2015	Percentage of students graduating in four years
All Students	110,473	94,544	85.6
Gender			
Male	56,294	46,288	82.2
Female	54,179	48,256	89.1
Race/Ethnicity			
Asian	2,866	2,640	92.1
White	59,300	52,391	88.3
Black	30,202	24,815	82.2
American Indian	1577	1293	82.0
Hispanic	12,578	10,060	80.0
Two or More Races	3,824	3,233	84.5
Disability/Disadvantage			
Economically Disadvantaged	44,047	35,076	79.6
Limited English Proficient	2,572	1,486	57.8
Students With Disabilities	11,613	7,816	67.3

Source: NC DPI, Available at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/cohortgradrate.

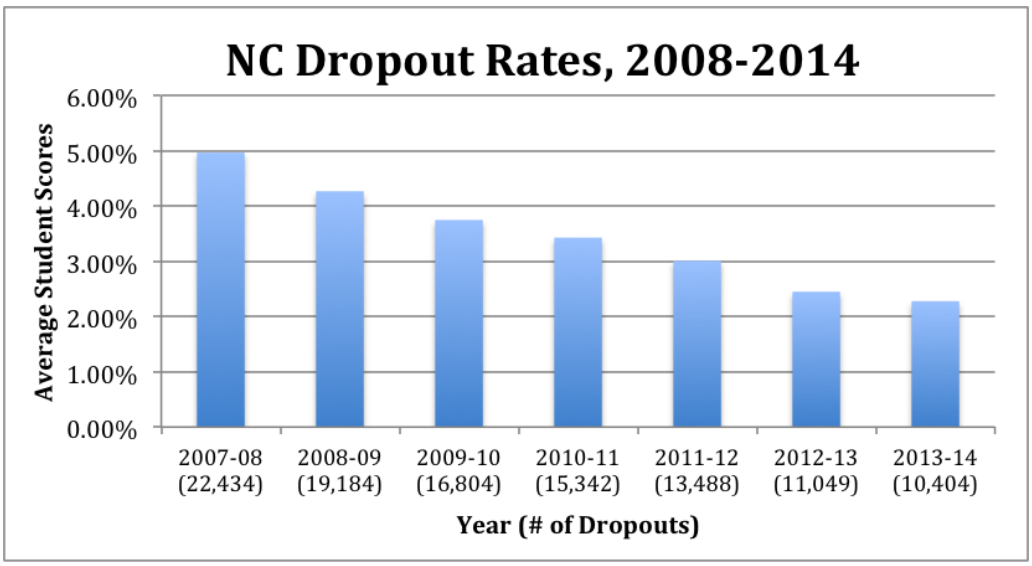
DROPOUT RATE

While student test scores are often the focus of discussions on student achievement, the high school completion and dropout rates tell a great deal about how students fare in an education system. The State Board of Education defines a dropout as "any student who leaves school for any reason before graduation or completion of a program of studies without transferring to another elementary or secondary school." Students who leave high school for a community college or GED, adult high school, or other program are counted as dropouts. In 2013-14, a reported 14.8 percent of the recorded dropouts left high school in order to enroll in community college. Schools make an effort to record the reasons students drop out, but due to the nature of dropping out it is difficult to get an accurate picture of why many students leave. An estimated 42 percent of dropouts are due to attendance issues. Needing (or choosing) to get a job, health issues, pregnancy, failing to come back to school after a long suspension, and lack of engagement with school or peers are some of the additional reasons cited for dropping out.

- The state reported 10,404 dropouts in 2013-14, a decrease from the 11,049 total reported in 2012-13.
- High schools in North Carolina reported a dropout rate of 2.28 percent in 2013-14, the lowest dropout rate ever recorded in North Carolina.
- Males accounted for 62.7 percent of the dropouts in 2013-14, up from 61.5 percent in 2012-13.
- Holding steady with past trends, Hispanic (3.25%), American Indian (3.61%), and black (2.68%) students experienced the highest dropout rates of all ethnic groups.

- All ethnic groups contributed to the decrease in dropouts reported. Excluding the small Pacific Islander group (9 to 7 dropouts), the two groups with the largest percentage decrease were black students with a 37.2 percent decrease in rate, and Hispanic Students with a 30.3 percent decrease in rate.

The graph below tracks changes in the state's dropout rate over the past 7 academic years.



Source: NC DPI Consolidated Data Report. Available at
http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/research/discipline/reports/consolidated/2013-14/consolidated-report.pdf

TEACHERS

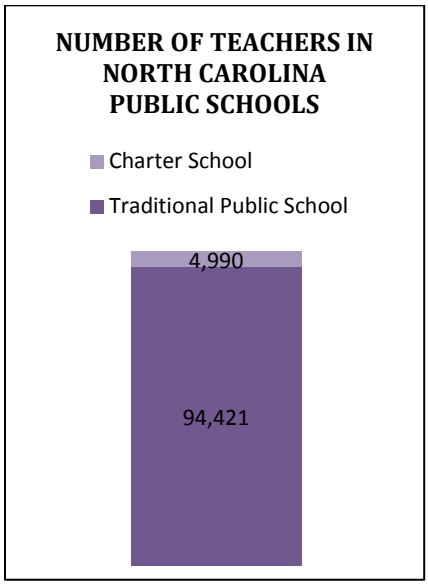
KEY ISSUES

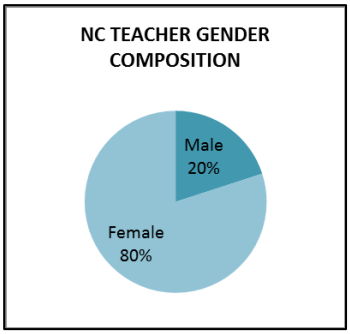
Teachers have the largest influence of any school-based factor on student outcomes.

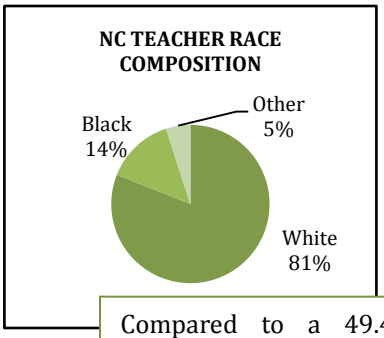
Recruiting and retaining quality teachers for North Carolina's classrooms is a top priority. Many teachers are approaching retirement; fewer young people are choosing teaching as a profession; and it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit teachers for hard-to-staff subjects (e.g., math, science, special education) and to teach in high-need schools. Schools in rural areas and high-poverty urban areas have had a particularly difficult time attracting and keeping teachers.

Teacher pay is an essential component of North Carolina's ability to keep the best teachers, but we continue to rank below most other states, in the Southeast and nationally, on this crucial measure. Opportunities for career growth and professional development are also important for keeping teachers in the classrooms.

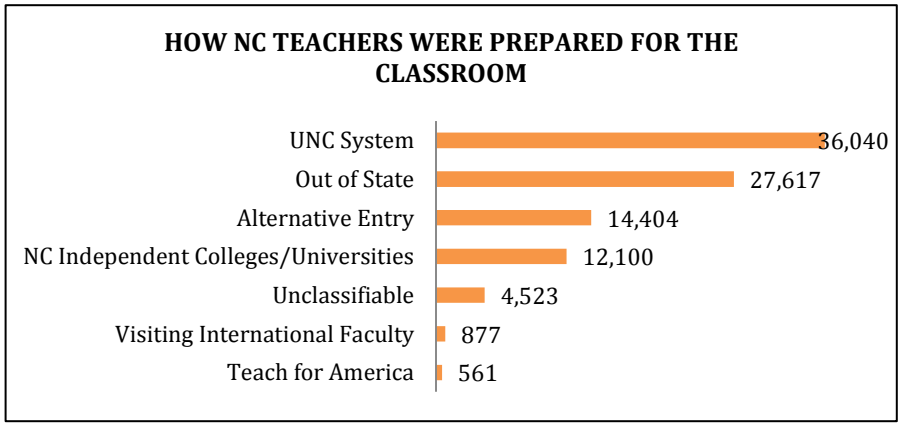
QUICK LOOK: DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE TEACHER WORK FORCE[1]







Compared to a 49.4% white student population



[1] Number of Teachers, Gender and Race (2015-16) – NC DPI 2015-16 Statistical Profile Table 16. Available at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/fbs/resources/data/.
Teacher Preparation Data (2013-14) -Staffing North Carolina's Classrooms. Available at https://publicpolicy.unc.edu/files/2015/07/Staffing_North-Carolinas_Classrooms_Evidence-Connecting_Teacher-Preparation_to_Teacher-Outcomes_April-2016.pdf.

PUBLIC SCHOOL FULL-TIME PERSONNEL SUMMARY 2015-16

	State	*Federal*	*Local*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*White*	*Black*	*Other*
Official Admin, Managers	952	146	816	1,914	818	1,096	1,491	377	46
Principals	2,403	0	38	2,441	976	1,465	1,800	578	63
Assistant Principals, Nonteaching	2,019	7	827	2,853	1,062	1,791	1,878	877	98
Total Administrators	**5,374**	**153**	**1,681**	**7,208**	**2,856**	**4,352**	**5,169**	**1,832**	**207**
Elementary Teachers	43,893	3,585	2,917	50,395	5,426	44,969	42,030	6,194	2,171
Secondary Teachers	25,560	586	1,824	27,970	10,167	17,803	21,887	4,679	1,404
Other Teachers	12,892	2,153	1,011	16,056	3,649	12,407	12,609	2,660	787
Total Teachers	**82,345**	**6,324**	**5,752**	**94,421**	**19,242**	**75,179**	**76,526**	**13,533**	**4,362**
Guidance	3,498	46	378	3,922	500	3,422	2,700	1,071	151
Psychological	603	84	39	726	87	639	638	60	28
Librarian, Audiovisual	2,038	6	168	2,212	145	2,067	1,976	167	69
Consultant, Supervisor	693	438	423	1,554	245	1,309	1,238	270	46
Other Professional	3,968	646	2,230	6,844	1,002	5,842	5,011	1,475	358
Total Professionals	**10,800**	**1,220**	**3,238**	**15,258**	**1,979**	**13,279**	**11,563**	**3,043**	**652**
Teacher Assistants	14,618	4,131	2,299	21,048	2,504	18,544	12,554	7,296	1,198
Technicians	519	147	1,045	1,711	954	757	1,082	538	91
Clerical, Secretarial	5,474	262	4,549	10,285	405	9,880	7,345	2,361	579
Service Workers	11,638	335	7,718	19,691	6,708	12,983	8,963	9,376	1,352
Skilled Crafts	965	19	2,063	3,047	2,825	222	2,380	560	107
Laborers, Unskilled	346	23	324	693	349	344	334	321	38
Total Other	**33,560**	**4,917**	**17,998**	**56,475**	**13,745**	**42,730**	**32,658**	**20,452**	**3,365**
TOTAL	**132,079**	**12,614**	**28,669**	**173,362**	**37,822**	**135,540**	**125,916**	**38,860**	**8,586**

Source: NC DPI 2015-16 Statistical Profile Table 16. Note: This chart does not include Charter/Regional Schools personnel.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND FOR TEACHERS

A growing number of quality teachers will be needed in North Carolina over the coming years. Driving the demand for new teachers are three major factors:

1) **Growing Student Population:** North Carolina's student population is growing and changing. Urban areas are growing in population annually and an estimated 20,000 students are expected to be added to the North Carolina school system every year.

2) **Retiring Educators:** A large number of baby boomers are approaching retirement age. As an entire generation of teachers prepares for retirement, North Carolina faces a teacher shortage predicament.

3) **Teacher Turnover:** 14,255 teachers left their school in 2014-15, either to retire, move to a different LEA or state, or change professions. The high level of teacher turnover requires a great deal of yearly recruitment and places a heavy financial burden on districts as they recruit and train new teachers.[2]

[2] NC DPI 2014-2015 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina. Available at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/educatoreffectiveness/surveys/leaving/2014-15turnoverreport.pdf.

While teacher supply shortages affect the state as a whole, some regions face dilemmas that are unique to their circumstances. In large, populous counties like Wake or Mecklenburg, the largest challenge may be recruiting additional teachers to fill classrooms for a growing student population. In slow growing counties, it may be combating high retirement rates of long-term faculty members. Data on teaching in North Carolina shows us that virtually all counties face the problem of finding qualified educators to teach specialized subjects including:

- ✓ mathematics
- ✓ science
- ✓ special education
- ✓ limited English proficiency

The schools facing the greatest challenges are those in rural areas, those with low teacher salary supplements, and those that serve high numbers of disadvantaged young people. Not surprisingly, teachers tend to gravitate toward schools that offer an attractive quality of life, higher pay, or the opportunity to work with motivated students. Conversely, teachers are more likely to leave school systems that offer fewer financial or other rewards, and those that serve more challenging student populations.

In addition to teachers leaving the classroom, enrollment in the UNC system's College of Education has declined dramatically over the last few years. This crucial tributary flowing into the state's teacher pipeline produces more than a third of all North Carolina teachers, and researchers have found that these teachers outperform those prepared through other channels.

CHANGE IN EDUCATION DEGREE ENROLLMENT (2010-13)

UNC SYSTEM PROGRAM	ENROLLMENT CHANGE (# OF STUDENTS)	ENROLLMENT CHANGE (%)
Appalachian State	-641	-16.9%
East Carolina	-328	-9.6%
Elizabeth City State	-241	-36.8%
Fayetteville State	-218	-28.5%
N.C. A&T	-201	-15.9%
N.C. State	-376	-20.7%
UNC-Asheville	-39	-39.8%
UNC-Chapel Hill	-164	-29.1%
UNC-Charlotte	-403	-12.8%)
UNC-Greensboro	-481	-20.1%
UNC-Pembroke	-443	-29.0%
UNC-Wilmington	-31	-3.4%
Western Carolina	-330	-17.0%
Winston-Salem State	-237	-39.4%

Source: Browder, C. (2014, August 15). "Fewer NC students seeking teaching degrees." WRAL.com.

TEACHER TURNOVER

The total turnover of teachers across North Carolina was higher in 2014-15 than it had been in any other year. Annual teacher turnover data shows that out of the 96,081 teachers employed during the 2014-2015 school

year, 14,255 teachers left their LEAs, resulting in an overall state attrition rate of 14.84%, up from the 2013-14 rate of 14.12%.[3]

Below is a list of the reasons teachers left the school system in 2014-15.

Reason for Leaving School System (2014-2015)	Percentage of teachers leaving for this reason	Number of teachers leaving for this reason
Total: Turnover but remained in education	**32.99%**	**4,492**
Resigned to teach in another NC LEA	22.62%	3,082
Move to non-teaching position in education	6.91%	941
Resigned to teach in NC Charter School	1.89%	258
Resigned to teach in an NC non-public/private school	1.54%	211
Total: Turnover for personal reasons	**41.72%**	**5,681**
Resigned due to family responsibilities/childcare	5.55%	757
Resigned to continue education/ sabbatical	2.10%	286
Resigned due to family relocation	11.36%	1,547
Resigned to teach in another state	7.54%	1,028
Dissatisfied with teaching/career change	8.87%	1,209
Resigned due to health/disability	1.43%	195
Retired with reduced benefits	3.51%	479
Re-employed retired teacher resigned	1.32%	180
Total: Turnover initiated by LEA	**7.21%**	**982**
Dismissed	0.12%	17
Non-renewal (probationary contract ended)	0.89%	121
Interim contract ended/not rehired	4.70%	640
Resigned in lieu of dismissal	1.10%	151
Resigned in lieu of non-renewal	0.04%	6
Did not obtain or maintain license	0.35%	47
Total: Turnover beyond control	**16.34%**	**2,226**
Reduction in force	0.09%	13
Retired with full benefits	12.89%	1,755
Deceased	0.38%	52
Resigned due to movement required by Military Orders	0.93%	126
End of VIF term	0.48%	66
End of Teach for America term	0.84%	114
Total: Turnover by other reasons	**7.16%**	**975**
Resigned for other reasons	5.35%	729
Resigned for unknown reasons	1.79%	245
Totals	**100%**	**14,255**

Source: NC DPI 2014-2015 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina.

[3] NC DPI 2014-2015 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina.

2014-2015 Teacher Turnover (As Reported By LEAs)

LEA	Total Teachers	Teachers Leaving	Teachers Leaving with Tenure	Turnover Percentage
Alamance	1,507	231	166	15.33
Alexander	338	29	22	8.58
Alleghany	121	114	9	11.57
Anson	232	39	27	16.81
Ashe	237	22	18	9.28
Asheboro City	356	49	33	13.78
Asheville City	327	56	36	17.13
Avery	164	10	7	6.10
Beaufort	500	66	50	13.20
Bertie	185	57	34	30.81
Bladen	334	65	51	19.46
Brunswick	805	120	94	14.91
Buncombe	1,672	217	163	12.98
Burke	847	79	78	9.33
Cabarrus	1,895	264	206	13.93
Caldwell	838	63	52	7.52
Camden	125	14	8	11.20
Carteret	650	85	66	13.08
Caswell	195	33	20	16.49
Catawba	1,050	124	105	11.81
Chapel Hill-Carrboro	942	175	133	18.58
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	8,609	1,420	858	16.49
Chatham	588	75	57	12.76
Cherokee	256	24	17	9.38
Clay	99	11	9	11.11
Cleveland	1,115	144	117	12.91
Clinton City	210	35	26	16.67
Columbus	397	68	50	17.13
Craven	948	167	115	17.62
Cumberland	3,650	641	483	17.56
Currituck	254	32	24	12.91
Dare	396	39	31	9.85
Davidson	1,204	112	86	9.30
Davie	436	57	42	13.07
Duplin	643	92	62	14.31
Durham	2,389	488	326	20.43
Edenton-Chowan	164	34	25	20.73
Edgecombe	394	95	65	24.11

Elizabeth City-Pasquotank	389	68	51	17.48
Elkin City	88	7	6	7.95
Franklin	579	106	72	18.31
Gaston	1,906	247	190	12.96
Gates	131	12	8	9.16
Graham	87	5	5	5.75
Granville	503	105	71	20.87
Greene	223	49	31	21.97
Guilford	4,984	745	534	14.95
Halifax	227	68	40	29.96
Harnett	1,370	266	158	19.42
Haywood	522	60	44	11.49
Henderson	921	121	98	13.14
Hertford	218	41	27	18.81
Hickory City	299	64	44	21.40
Hoke	549	142	80	25.87
Hyde	62	14	11	22.58
Iredell-Statesville	1,300	191	155	14.69
Jackson	250	37	22	14.80
Johnston	2,292	321	230	14.01
Jones	100	17	58	18.59
Kannapolis City	382	71	58	18.59
Lee	636	118	66	18.55
Lenoir	581	75	48	12.91
Lexington City	219	54	36	24.66
Lincoln	789	81	68	10.27
Macon	324	47	39	14.51
Madison	191	16	9	8.38
Martin	259	25	23	9.65
McDowell	439	48	34	10.93
Mitchell	148	16	16	10.81
Montgomery	283	39	24	13.78
Moore	833	144	114	17.29
Mooresville Graded	354	42	34	11.86
Mount Airy City	120	17	17	14.17
Nash-Rocky	947	174	128	18.37
New Hanover	1,686	212	178	12.57
Newton Conover	205	37	28	18.05
Northampton	155	52	28	33.55
Onslow	1,589	246	163	15.48
Orange	559	90	71	16.10
Pamlico	104	17	7	16.35

Pender	531	78	60	14.66
Perquimans	121	25	14	20.66
Person	311	62	42	19.94
Pitt	1,638	286	196	17.47
Polk	189	22	21	11.64
Randolph	1,193	153	116	12.82
Richmond	497	97	59	19.52
Roanoke Rapids	190	28	23	14.74
Robeson	1,505	273	160	18.14
Rockingham	881	93	71	10.56
Rowan- Salisbury	1,300	183	144	14.08
Rutherford	556	51	37	9.17
Sampson	570	61	42	10.70
Scotland	432	82	56	18.98
Stanly	607	71	62	11.70
Stokes	471	57	46	12.10
Surry	543	52	46	9.58
Swain	139	16	13	11.51
Thomasville City	168	36	23	21.43
Transylvania	273	44	40	16.12
Tyrrell	49	5	4	10.20
Union	2,567	401	312	15.62
Vance	486	92	69	18.93
Wake	10,144	1,355	1,057	13.36
Warren	163	49	28	30.06
Washington	113	35	29	30.97
Watauga	355	52	35	14.65
Wayne	1,218	142	106	11.66
Weldon City	74	13	4	17.57
Whiteville City	163	19	17	11.66
Wilkes	631	63	39	9.98
Wilson	747	124	88	16.60
Winston-Salem/Forsyth	3,826	472	364	12.34
Yadkin	377	33	30	8.75
Yancey	171	10	8	5.85

Source: NC DPI 2014-2015 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina.

TEACHER LICENSING & STANDARDS

All professional employees of public schools must hold a professional educator's license, issued by NC DPI, for the subject or grade level they teach or for the professional education assignment they hold. NC DPI offers three variations of the professional educator's license, listed below.

- **Standard Professional 1 (SP1) Professional Educator's Licenses** are intended for teachers with 0-2 years of teaching experience, and are valid for three years. To be issued a SP1 Professional Educator's License, an individual must have:
    - completed a state approved teacher education program from a regionally accredited college or university, or
    - completed another state's approved alternative route to licensure, met the federal requirements to be designated as "Highly Qualified," and earned a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college.
        - Praxis II Testing - for middle grades (6-9), secondary (9-12), K-12 (except Exceptional Children: General Curriculum) license areas.
        - Pearson Test for North Carolina: Foundations of Reading and General Curriculum (effective October 1, 2014) - for Elementary Education and Exceptional Children: General Curriculum licenses only.

- **Standard Professional 2 (SP2) Professional Educator's Licenses** are intended for teachers with 3 or more years of teaching experience, and are valid for five years. Teachers who are fully licensed and "Highly Qualified" in another state who have three or more years of teaching experience in another state AND who meet NC State Board of Education approved licensure exam requirements OR have National Board Certification are issued the SP2 Professional Educator's license.

- **Lateral Entry Licenses** are intended for individuals who did not follow a traditional teaching preparation path but who wish to enter teaching, either straight out of college or as mid-career professionals. To qualify for a lateral entry license, individuals must hold a Bachelor's Degree from a regionally accredited college or university and meet two other criteria from a list of qualifications. These criteria include:

    - Relevant degree or 24 Semester Hours of course work in core area
    - Minimum college GPA requirement
    - Passing score on the NC State Board of Education approved licensure exams
    - Passing scores on Core Academic Skills for Educators, or a total SAT score of 1100, or a total ACT score of 24 plus a GPA requirement
    - Five years of experience in work considered relevant by the employing LEA[4]

LICENSURE ISSUES

The topic of teacher licensure reveals a tension between keeping up with high demand for new teachers while maintaining high teaching standards for those entering the profession.

In recent years North Carolina has boasted one of the highest passing rates in the nation for the PRAXIS exam, the most demanding exit examination now available for college students and mid-career professionals entering the teaching profession. The high standards held for North Carolina teachers have resulted in fewer college seniors qualifying for the initial teacher license. Therefore, the increasing demand for teachers has resulted in heightened pressure for less stringent licensure standards.

The option for lateral entry into teaching has become a way to recruit teachers for specific content areas or into regions of greatest need. Some wishing to enter teaching laterally, however, are confronted with rules and

[4] NC DPI, Qualifying for a Lateral Entry License.
Available at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/licensure/lateralentry.pdf.

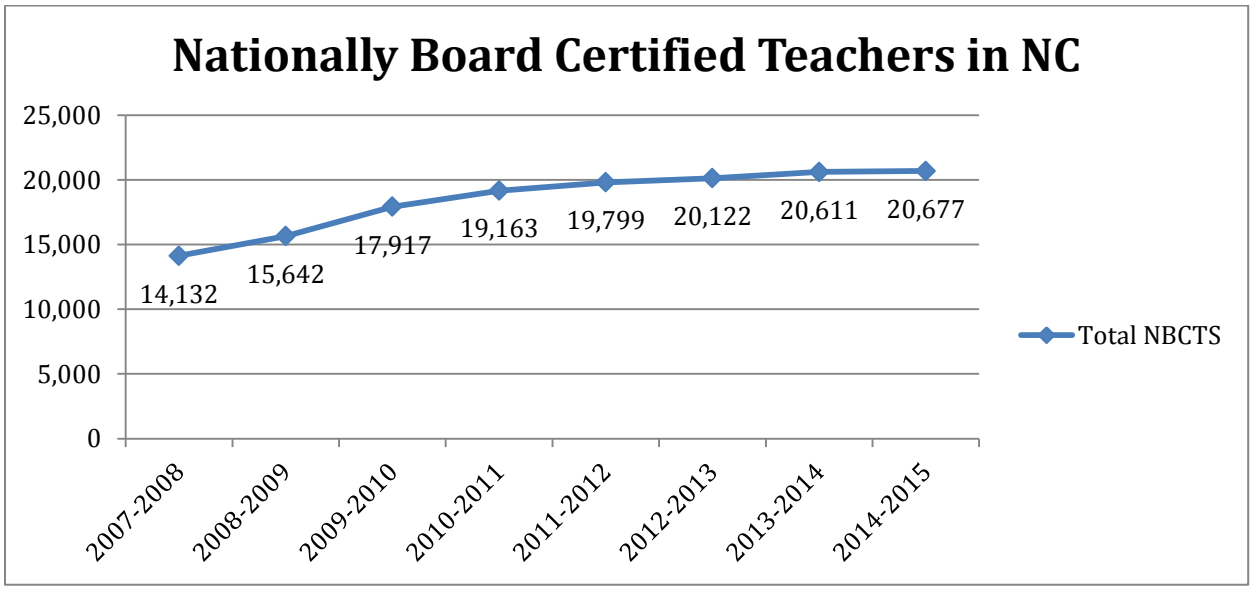
regulations that could require them to go back to college for a year or more of additional work before being able to enter teaching. In some cases, especially in areas of shortage such as mathematics and science, college graduates are allowed to enter the classroom while they are taking additional courses in education. Given the relatively low salaries of teachers as compared to other professions for college graduates, few people have the motivation to return to college for a year in order to secure a teaching job. To combat this issue, some programs have created specific pipelines to make the lateral entry process smoother and more appealing, particularly for college graduates.

Policymakers confronted with the maze of rules and regulations governing teaching quickly discover that there is no consensus in the education community as to what would represent adequate minimum preparation for someone coming into the field. Issues of contention include essential coursework as well as how to effectively balance hours of classroom experience with traditional college-level coursework.

National Board Certification

National Board Certification is a concept advanced by the Carnegie Commission. The commission sought ways to elevate the level of teaching and to establish a high, national standard that would recognize the nation's best teachers. To gain national certification, teachers must prepare a detailed portfolio illustrating their work. Panels of teachers then scrutinize and review their teaching skills and portfolios to determine each teacher's effectiveness in the classroom.

Pay incentives have been incorporated by North Carolina and other states to encourage more teachers to undergo the process of national board certification. Since 2013 and continuing today, North Carolina has by far the largest number of nationally board certified teachers (NBCTS) in the nation.[5] In 2014-15 North Carolina had 20,677 National Board Certified Teachers. Moreover, Wake County is the number one district for National Board Certified teachers in the United States.



Source: NC DPI, National Board Certification.

[5] NC DPI, National Board Certification. Available at http://www.nbpts.org/.

To support teachers working towards national board certification, the state of North Carolina offers a loan of $1900 to cover the assessment fee to eligible teachers. Teachers repay the loan over three years. North Carolina provides every eligible initial candidate three days of paid professional leave.

Candidates are eligible for the state loan program if they:

- are paid entirely from state funds
- have completed three full years in North Carolina Public Schools (This includes DOC, DHHS, Office of Juvenile Justice, and public charter schools)
- hold a valid, clear, continuing North Carolina teaching license
- have not previously received State Funds for participating in the NBPTS assessment. (If a candidate received funding, withdrew from the process and fulfilled the repayment obligation, she/he can be funded again), and
- engage in direct classroom instruction, library/media work, or school counseling 70% of the time over the course of the academic year.[6]

Additional Pathways to Teaching and Lateral Entry Programs

In recent decades, national and statewide programs have been developed to supplement traditional paths for teacher preparation and recruitment. Below is an overview of programs that are recruiting and preparing individuals for teaching in North Carolina.

Teach For America

Teach for America (TFA) recruits individuals with proven leadership abilities and strong academics to commit to two years of teaching in high-need school systems across the United States. The majority of TFA corps members are immediate college graduates. Individuals are trained in instructional methods and given hands-on teaching experience during an intensive Summer Institute the summer before their first fall as teachers. Throughout the two year commitment, TFA corps members are employees of the school system to which they are assigned but receive in-depth mentoring and support from TFA. TFA's mission is both to improve the quality of teachers in areas of highest need, and to invest in an upcoming generation of leaders that will go on to make a long-term impact on education in whatever field they choose.

TFA has been placing teachers in Eastern North Carolina since the organization's inception in 1990. In 2015-16, approximately 277 corps members teach at every grade level across 13 counties in eastern NC. Of the Eastern NC corps, 22 percent teach in elementary schools, 33 percent in middle schools, 32 percent in high schools, and 13 percent in special education.[7] TFA has been working in Charlotte since 2004, and currently has 190 corps members teaching in 30 schools across the city. In Charlotte, 31 percent teach in high schools, 43 percent teach in middle schools, and 26 percent teach in elementary schools. These teachers reach almost 12,000 students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.[8] TFA corps members are showing substantial growth and results with their students in both of these regions.

New legislation in 2013 increased the amount of state funding going to TFA and directed TFA to expand on efforts to recruit, train, and support NC teachers, to expand programs aimed at recruiting NC residents for TFA, and to promote retention of teachers beyond the two year initial teaching commitment required by TFA.

[6] NC DPI, National Board Certification.
[7] Teach for America Eastern North Carolina. Available at https://easternnorthcarolina.teachforamerica.org/.
[8] Teach For America Charlotte. Available at https://charlotte.teachforamerica.org/.

Since December 2014, TFA has submitted annual reports to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on their progress.[9]

North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program

Established in 1986, the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program was one of the premier teacher recruitment and development programs in the nation. The program gave 500 scholarships per year to graduating high school seniors dedicated to teaching in North Carolina after their graduation from college. The Teaching Fellows Program was founded to change the face of the workforce in North Carolina – to make it more diverse, and to attract some of the state's top students. The average Teaching Fellow graduated high school with a GPA of 4.0 or higher on a weighted scale and ranked in the top 10% of his or her class. Each year, approximately 20% of the program's recipients were minorities and 30% were male. The program included a scholarship to one of 17 participating North Carolina colleges or universities, a discovery trip across the state to learn about North Carolina's schools, and other development and enrichment programs. In exchange for the scholarship and program, Teaching Fellows committed to teaching in North Carolina for at least four years.

Between 1986 and 2011, the Teaching Fellows Program recruited nearly 11,000 of the best and brightest high school students to become teachers. Seventy percent of Teaching Fellows remained employed after four years, with 64 percent employed six years or more after completing their initial four-year teaching service requirement. During the 2013-2014 school year, 4,632 Teaching Fellows were employed in all 100 of North Carolina's 100 counties.

Funding for the program expired in 2011, and the Teaching Fellows program was not restored in the 2012 NC General Assembly budget. The repeal became effective June 30, 2015 when the final class of Teaching Fellows graduated.

North Carolina Teacher Corps

The North Carolina Teacher Corps (NCTC) was established in 2011 to recruit top graduates from North Carolina's colleges and universities or mid-career professionals to teach in high-need regions or subjects (particularly math, science, and special education) in North Carolina schools. Like Teach for America, corps members must meet certain eligibility requirements, not already hold a teaching degree, and must commit to attend a summer training session and then teach for at least two years.

The program was first piloted through NC DPI through a Race to the Top grant, and was included in the Excellent Schools Act passed in June 2012. The first cohort of teachers was recruited in 2012 and began teaching in the 2012-2013 school year. Legislation by the state in 2013 moved the NC Teacher Corps program under the direction of Teach for America and funds were transferred to TFA to administer the program.

According to a March 2016 TFA report, there are currently 190 corps members who identify as part of the North Carolina Teaching Corps. One hundred and thirty two of them graduated from a North Carolina college or university and 123 of them are North Carolina natives. Characteristics of the North Carolina connected corps members include:

- The average GPA is 3.4
- 55 percent come from a low-income background

[9] Joint Legislative Oversight Committee Reports Received. Available at http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/DocumentSites/browseDocSite.asp?nID=19&sFolderName=\Reports%20Received.

- 53 percent are people of color
- 40 percent are teaching math or science
- 34 percent are the first in their families to graduate from college
- 2 percent served in the military[10]

TEACHER CONTRACTS AND TENURE

In North Carolina, teacher tenure, or "career status" of K-12 teachers, previously guaranteed due process protections (including notice of reasons for dismissal, a right to a hearing, and other job protections) to teachers who successfully completed four years of teaching. However, in 2013 the NC General Assembly eliminated the prospect of tenure for new teachers and those who had not yet received tenure. Teachers ineligible for career status are employed on one-, two-, or four-year contracts.

The 2013 legislation also would have phased out career status for all other teachers, but in April 2016 the NC Supreme Court unanimously ruled that portion of the law unconstitutional, affirming that teachers who earned tenure before the 2013 law was passed can keep it.

TEACHER SALARIES

KEY SALARY ISSUES

School personnel pay is the single largest item in the state budget. Policymakers typically aim to set a salary level that assures the teaching profession's competitiveness and attracts an adequate number of educators to meet the needs of classrooms across the state, while balancing other budget priorities.

Former Governor Jim Hunt put forward a plan to move North Carolina teachers to the national average in pay by the year 2000. That plan, incorporated into the Excellent Schools Act of 1997, resulted in teacher pay raises of over 20% in a four-year period. Unfortunately, North Carolina still fell short of the national average and has started to slip even more. The average teacher salary in North Carolina dropped 14.7 percent from 1999-2000 to 2012-13, more than any other state, while the average teacher salary across the nation decreased by just 1.3 percent over the same period.[11] In 2015-16, North Carolina ranked 41st with an average public school teacher salary of $47,985, about $10,000 less than the national average of $58,064.[12] In 2003-04, North Carolina ranked 22nd in the nation for average public teacher salary. North Carolina currently ranks 9th out of 12 states in the Southeast – only Louisiana, Mississippi, and West Virginia are lower.

Rank	State	Change in avg. salary, 1999-2013
1	Wyoming	+24.2%
5	Louisiana	+13.6%
	D.C.	+10.2%
6	Maryland	+ 8.4%
23	Kentucky	+ 1.2%
	US AVERAGE	- 1.3%
34	Tennessee	- 2.7%
35	South Carolina	- 2.8%
36	West Virginia	- 3.0%
38	Mississippi	- 3.5%
43	Georgia	- 5.7%
44	Virginia	- 5.8%
46	Florida	- 6.5%
49	Indiana	- 10.0%
50	**North Carolina**	**- 14.7%**

When considering cross-state comparisons, it is important to remember that a number of factors influence

[10] Teach for America, North Carolina Quarterly and Annual Legislative Report March 2016. Available at http://www.ncleg.net/documentsites/committees/JLEOC/Reports%20Received/2016%20Reports%20Received/Teach%20For%20America%20Quarter%20Three%20Report%20March%202016.pdf.

[11] National Center for Education Statistics. Table 211.60. Estimated average annual salary of teachers in public elementary and secondary schools, by state: Selected years, 1969-70 through 2012-13. Available at https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_211.60.asp.

[12] National Education Association, Rankings of the States 2015 and Estimates of School Statistics 2016. Available at https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/2831158/2016-NEA-Rankings-and-Estimates.pdf.

teacher salary averages including cost of living and the influence of teacher unions. For example, some states address the issue of cost of living variation by pre-adjusting for cost of living variation across their state and allowing local school districts to make up differences through supplement allocation.

Current Teacher Salary

There is a statewide teacher salary schedule that applies to every teacher in NC. Teachers may move up the schedule based on a combination of their years of experience, education level, and National Board Certification. A complete salary schedule can be viewed at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/fbs/finance/salary. The state's substantial contribution to school funding eases the financial burden of personnel costs on districts and helps equalize the abilities of low- and high-wealth districts to attract top teachers.

The 2015-16 budget passed by the NC General Assembly increased beginning teacher pay from $33,000 to $35,000, provided a one-time $750 bonus for all teachers and administrators, and funded band increases for educators moving to higher bands on the new tiered salary schedule created in 2014.

In 2013 the General Assembly passed legislation removing salary supplements for advanced degrees. Teachers who were already receiving the supplement when the law was passed, and those who started advanced degree programs and completed at least one course by August 1, 2013 were eligible for the pay supplement.

A teacher who earns National Board Certification automatically receives an additional 12%.

After a base salary is set by the state, a teacher's salary is then augmented by local school system supplements. However, there is wide deviation among local salary supplements. In some school systems, teacher supplements are as little as $100. In other systems, such as Chapel Hill-Carrboro, Wake County, Durham County and Charlotte-Mecklenburg, salary supplements are over $6,000. In 2015-16, seven LEAs offered no additional supplement (Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Halifax, Madison, Swain and Weldon City). The average local salary supplement in the state is $3,870.

From 1996-97 until 2009-10, "ABCs" bonuses were paid to teachers working in schools that had exceeded their student performance goals. They were eligible to receive an additional $1,500 as a reward for high student achievement, or $750 for meeting goals. **ABC bonuses were last paid in 2008-09.**

2015-2016 SALARIES FOR TEACHERS WITH BACHELOR'S DEGREES

Years of Experience	Annual Salary	Annual Salary with National Board Certification
0-2	35,000	N/A
3-4	35,000	39,200
5-9	36,500	40,880
10-14	40,000	44,800
15-19	43,500	48,720
20-24	46,500	52,080
25-35+	50,000	56,000

Source: NC DPI, Fiscal Year 2015 – 2016 North Carolina Public School Salary Schedules

2015-2016 SALARIES FOR TEACHERS WITH MASTER'S DEGREES

Years of Experience	Annual Salary	Annual Salary with National Board Certification
0-2	38,500	N/A
3-4	38,500	42,700
5-9	40,150	44,530
10-14	44,000	44,800
15-19	47,850	53,070
20-24	51,150	56,730
25-35+	55,000	61,000

Source: NC DPI, Fiscal Year 2015 – 2016 North Carolina Public School Salary Schedules

TASK FORCE FOR TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS AND COMPENSATION

Legislation passed in 2013 established an 18-member NC Educator Effectiveness and Compensation Task Force to make recommendations on whether to create a statewide model of incentives to boost recruitment and retention of effective educators. In carrying out their work, the Task Force was required to take into account the following factors:

- Simplification of the current salary schedules.
- Use of incentive pay to recruit and retain educators to teach in areas of highest need.
- Methods for identifying effective teaching and its relationship to an alternative compensation system.
- Educator compensation reform in other states and NC pilot programs currently using alternative compensation.
- Barriers to implementation of alternative compensation systems.

The Task Force reported its findings to the NC General Assembly on April 15, 2014 and immediately dissolved after filing the report. The report can be viewed online at
http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/DocumentSites/browseDocSite.asp?nID=255

LOCAL SALARY SUPPLEMENTS

As mentioned earlier, many school districts in North Carolina add a salary supplement to the salary allotment provided by the state. Listed below are the average teacher salary supplements by district for the 2014-15 school year.

LOCAL AVERAGE TEACHER SALARY SUPPLEMENT IN 2015-16

School System	Supplement	School System	Supplement	School System	Supplement
Alamance-Burlington	4,201	Forsyth County	3,717	Orange County	5,200
Alexander County	2,588	Franklin County	3,216	Pamlico County	1,600
Alleghany County	200	Gaston County	2,418	Pasquotank County	1,678

Anson County	1,091	Gates County	550	Pender County	2,791
Ashe County	500	Graham County	-	Perquimans County	913
Asheboro City	2,767	Granville County	3,268	Person County	4,270
Asheville City	3,951	Greene County	1,000	Pitt County	1,884
Avery County	1,300	Guilford County	4,746	Polk County	2,721
Beaufort County	1,608	Halifax County	-	Randolph County	2,670
Bertie County	912	Harnett County	2,266	Richmond County	999
Bladen County	1,806	Haywood County	1,967	Roanoke Rapids	2,133
Brunswick County	2, 763	Henderson County	3,705	Robeson County	2,349
Buncombe County	3,721	Hertford County	1,289	Rockingham County	2,301
Burke County	2,195	Hickory City	2,481	Rowan-Salisbury	2,267
Cabarrus County	3,053	Hoke County	2,705	Rutherford County	1,100
Caldwell County	1,751	Hyde County	653	Sampson County	3,080
Camden County	1,812	Iredell-Statesville City	2,575	Scotland County	1,961
Carteret County	2,635	Jackson County	2,497	Stanly County	1,913
Caswell County	821	Johnston County	3,854	Stokes County	1,593
Catawba County	3,787	Jones County	2,200	Surry County	1,258
Chapel Hill-Carrboro	6,315	Kannapolis City	2,511	Swain County	-
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	6,764	Lee County	3,288	Thomasville City	2,195
Chatham County	4,692	Lenoir County	1,700	Transylvania County	3,507
Cherokee County	-	Lexington City	3,621	Tyrrell County	1,000
Clay County	-	Lincoln County	2,904	Union County	3,953
Cleveland County	1,641	Macon County	744	Vance County	2,500
Clinton City	4,045	Madison County	-	Wake County	6,975
Columbus County	2,123	Martin County	1,200	Warren County	1,900
Craven County	2,300	McDowell County	927	Washington County	600
Cumberland County	3,523	Mitchell County	100	Watauga County	2,355
Currituck County	3,541	Montgomery County	1,514	Wayne County	2,715
Dare County	4,211	Moore County	3,657	Weldon City	-
Davidson County	2,670	Mooresville City	3,180	Whiteville City	1,923

Davie County	2,413	Mt. Airy City	1,452	Wilkes County	2,173
Duplin County	3,110	Nash-Rocky Mount	3,927	Wilson County	3,453
Durham County	6,790	New Hanover County	3,476	Yadkin County	2,423
Edenton-Chowan	1,299	Newton-Conover City	2,908	Yancey County	300
Edgecombe County	2,141	Northampton County	1,225	**STATE AVERAGE**	**3,870**
Elkin City	2,238	Onslow County	4,109		

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 20: 2015-16 Selected Statistics of Local Salary Supplements. Available at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/fbs/finance/salary/.

SCHOOL CHOICE

KEY ISSUES

While traditional public schools serve nearly 86 percent of North Carolina's students, parents have other options available to them when deciding how to educate their children. This section covers basic information about public charter schools and magnet schools, as well as longstanding choice options outside the public school system: private schools and home schooling.

In 2014-15, there were 1,667,425 total K-12 students in North Carolina. Of these students, 97,259 were in private school[1] (6%), 68,770 were in public charter schools[2] (4%), and 67,804 were homeschooled[3] (4%). Approximately 1,433,592 students were enrolled in traditional public schools (including magnet schools).[4]

INTRODUCTION TO CHARTER SCHOOLS

Charter schools are publicly funded but privately governed schools operating in 41 states, including North Carolina, as well as the District of Columbia. Charter schools are granted **autonomy** in exchange for **accountability**; that is, they are exempt from many state and local laws but must meet performance and operational standards in order to keep their doors open. Charter schools are nonsectarian and tuition-free.

A charter is essentially a contract to run a school, negotiated between a charter school operator (often a nonprofit organization) and a charter school "authorizer," which is an entity vested by state law with the authority to grant charters and oversee chartered schools. Many states have multiple authorizers, often including local school districts, state education agencies, independent charter boards, and/or higher education institutions. North Carolina has a single charter authorizer: the State Board of Education.

The charter agreement describes how the school will be governed, what will be taught, how student achievement will be measured, and what students are expected to achieve. As long as the school meets the terms of its charter, it is free from many of the rules and regulations that apply to other public schools in areas such as staffing, scheduling, managing school finances, and setting curriculum. Despite these freedoms, charter schools are required to comply with health and safety regulations, anti-discrimination laws, and laws mandating a minimum number of school days. In addition, they are bound by open meetings laws, and state education authorities clarified in 2014 that, like other public schools, charter schools are required to disclose names, salaries, and positions of employees, though some charter schools and supporters dispute their reading of state law.[5] Charter schools are required to administer and report results on state-mandated end-of-grade and end-of-course tests, and thus cover the same core subjects as traditional public schools. However, unlike traditional public schools, if a charter school fails to meet the terms of the charter agreement, the authorizer may revoke the charter and close the school.

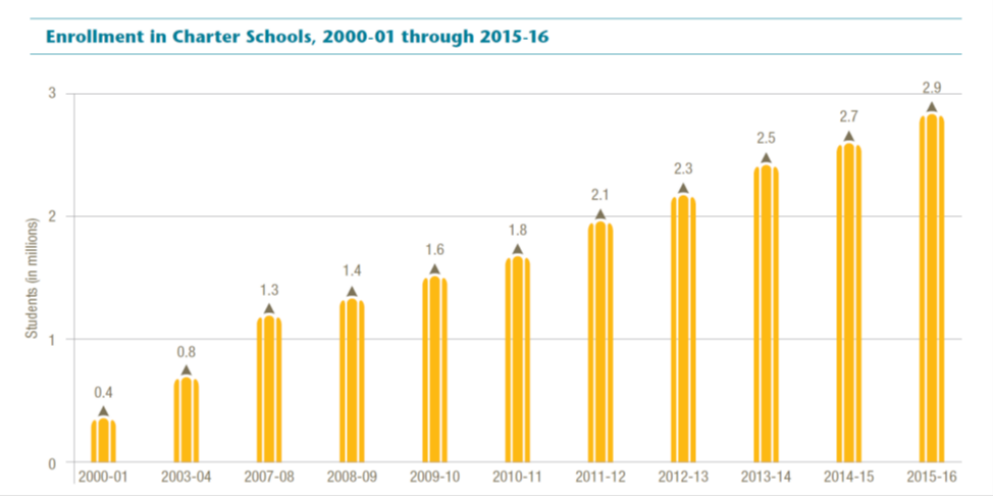
[1] 2015 North Carolina Private School Statistics. Available at https://ncdoa.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/documents/files/14-15CSStats.pdf.
[2] NC DPI 2014-15 Average Daily Membership. Available at http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/fbs/accounting/data/.
[3] 2015 North Carolina Home School Statistical Summary. Available at http://ncdoa.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Documents/hhh240.pdf.
[4] NC DPI 2014-15 Average Daily Membership.
[5] Charlotte Observer, "NC education officials: Charter schools must disclose salaries." Available at http://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/local/education/article9113006.html.

CHARTER SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES

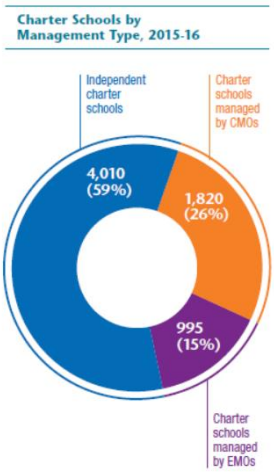
Charter schools are growing across the country. The first charter school opened its doors in St. Paul, Minnesota, in September 1992. As of the 2015-16 school year, there are 6,824 charter schools across the country serving over 2.9 million students.[6]

Charter Schools Opened and in Operation as of 2015-2016[7]								
State	**New Charters in 2015**	**Total Charter Schools**	**State**	**New Charters in 2015**	**Total Charter Schools**	**State**	**New Charters in 2015**	**Total Charter Schools**
Alaska	1	28	Kansas	0	10	Ohio	8	373
Arizona	19	535	Louisiana	11	143	Oklahoma	7	35
Arkansas	10	50	Maine	1	7	Oregon	5	127
California	80	1,234	Maryland	4	50	Pennsylvania	4	175
Colorado	15	226	Massachusetts	2	81	Rhode Island	3	28
Connecticut	2	24	Michigan	7	300	South Carolina	3	68
Delaware	5	27	Minnesota	9	165	Tennessee	20	100
D.C.	4	115	Mississippi	2	2	Texas	53	723
Florida	38	656	Missouri	3	68	Utah	3	111
Georgia	11	115	Nevada	2	38	Virginia	2	9
Hawaii	1	34	New Hampshire	2	26	Wisconsin	13	244
Idaho	1	48	New Jersey	4	89	Wyoming	0	4
Illinois	3	145	New Mexico	3	99			
Indiana	15	91	New York	12	257	**TOTAL**	**404**	**6,824**
Iowa	0	3	**North Carolina**	**15**	**161**			

Nationally, charter school growth is increasing each year. During the 2015-16 school year, more than 400 new charter public schools opened, and an estimated 250,000 additional students attended charter schools in the 2015-16 school year compared with the previous year. This is an estimated 9 percent growth in charter school enrollment between fall 2014 and fall 2015.[8]



[6] National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, Charter Schools, Students, and Management Organizations, 2015-16. Available at http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/New-Closed-2016.pdf.
[7] National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, Charter Schools, Students, and Management Organizations, 2015-16.
[8] National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, Charter Schools, Students, and Management Organizations, 2015-16.



Most charter schools are independent, "stand-alone" schools that operate at a single site. Others are part of networks run by management organizations, either nonprofit charter management organizations (CMOs) or for-profit education management organizations (EMOs).

Source: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, Charter Schools, Students, and Management Organizations, 2015-16.

CHARTER SCHOOLS IN NORTH CAROLINA

On June 21, 1996, the North Carolina General Assembly passed House Bill 955, the "Charter Schools Act of 1996," which established opportunities for charter schools to operate across the state. The purposes of charter schools articulated by the statute were to:

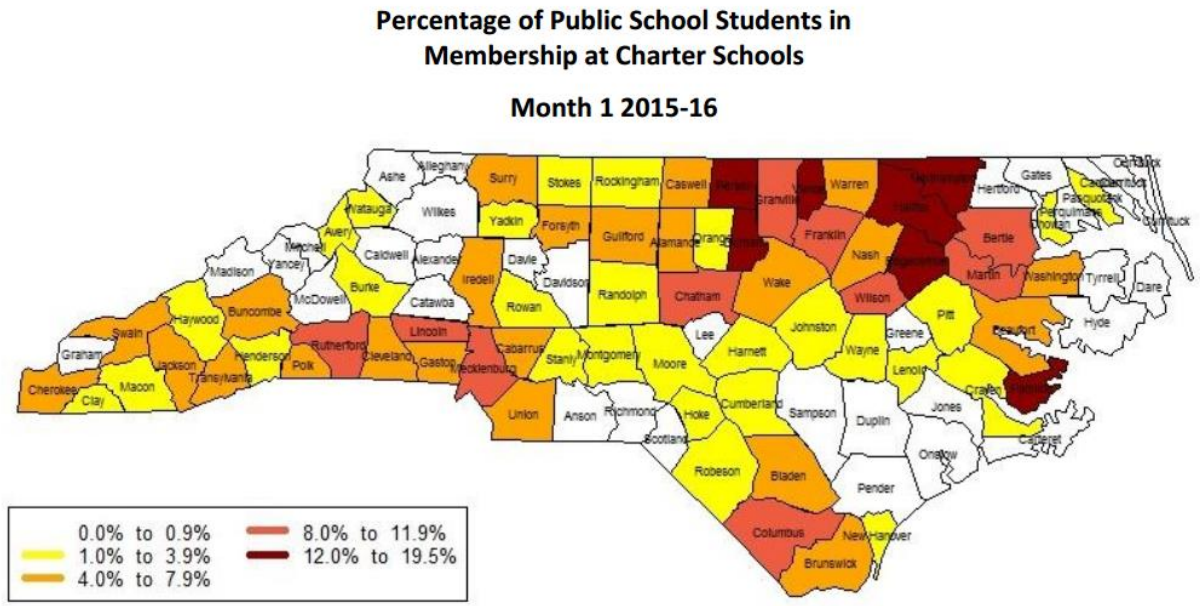
- Improve student learning;
- Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning opportunities for students who are identified as at risk of academic failure or academically gifted;
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunities to be responsible for the learning program at the school site;
- Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system; and,
- Hold the schools . . . accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results, and provide the schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems (G.S. 115C-238.29A).

In North Carolina any person, group of persons, or nonprofit corporation may seek to establish a charter school. The State Board of Education gives final approval on all successful applicants. The State Board may grant the initial charter for up to 10 years and may renew the charter upon the request of the chartering entity for subsequent periods of up to 10 years each. A charter school's board of directors governs the school. The board is ultimately responsible for decision-making in all matters relating to the day-to-day operations of the school, including budgeting, hiring/firing, curriculum, instructional materials, operating procedures, transportation, insurance, and food services.

In 2015-16, North Carolina had 158 operating charter schools, including two virtual charter schools.[9] North Carolina ranked 12th in the nation in 2015-16 for the number of charter schools in operation, up from 16th in the nation in 2012-13.[10] The size of charter schools in the state ranged from 19 to 1,776 students in 2014-15[11]. State law requires a minimum of 65 students unless the school obtains a waiver.

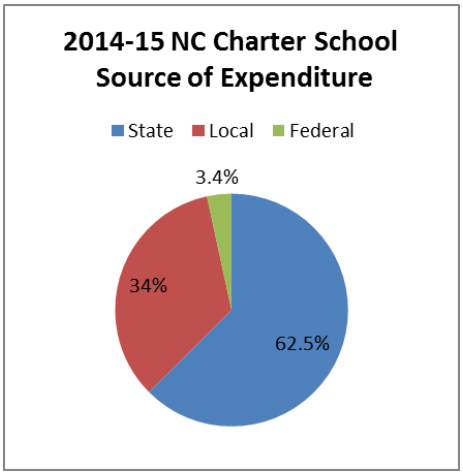
[9] NC DPI Office of Charter Schools, Available at http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/charterschools/schools/.
[10] National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, Charter Schools, Students, and Management Organizations, 2015-16.
[11] NC DPI 2014-15 Average Daily Membership.

Fourteen new charter schools opened in North Carolina in 2015-16 and fifteen charter school applications were approved. Three charter schools closed. Since the cap was lifted in 2011, between 14 and 26 applications have been approved each year.[12]



Source: Percentage of Public School Students in Membership at Charter Schools. Available at http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/fbs/resources/data/csmembersmap.pdf. Note: City LEAs are combined with the county LEAs. In most cases, the city percentage is similar to the county percentage, except for the following: Weldon City (17.1%) and Roanoke Rapids (5.5%) in Halifax County (22.7%); Elkin City (1.8%), and Mount Airy City (9.4%) in Surry County (4.7%); Chapel Hill (1.2%) in Orange County (6.4%); and Kannapolis City (2.3%) in Cabarrus (5.3%).

Charter Schools receive funding based on the average per pupil allocation in the local education agency (LEA) from which the student came.[13] In 2015-16, charter schools received $444,131,335 in state funds for 81,943 planned students.[14] This breaks down to an average of $5,420 per charter student from the state. State funds may be used for any purpose other than purchasing a building. Charter schools also receive LEA funding on a per pupil basis equal to LEA funds for program costs for all other public school students. Unlike traditional public schools in their districts, charter schools do not receive capital funds and must locate and lease or purchase facilities on their own. Some charter schools have located facilities in renovated storefronts, church facilities, mobile structures, or traditional school buildings throughout the state.



Source: NC DPI Highlights of the Budget 2016

[12] NC DPI Highlights of the Budget 2016.
Available at http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/fbs/resources/data/highlights/2016highlights.pdf.
[13] NC DPI Highlights of the Budget 2016.
[14] NC DPI Highlights of the Budget 2016.

Charter schools do receive federal funding. As with traditional public schools, federal funding is targeted towards specific populations, including low income children and children with special needs.

Major Developments in North Carolina's Charter Sector

Senate Bill 8 (2011)

In July 2011, the North Carolina General Assembly passed Senate Bill 8 reforming the state's charter school law. The Act redefined previous law by:

1) Removing the 100-school cap on charter schools statewide;
2) Allowing the State Board discretion in granting final approval of charter schools;
3) Raising the enrollment growth cap in charter schools to 20 percent of all students;
4) Permitting charter schools to charge fees charged by the local school administrative unit;
5) Strengthening the standards for retaining a charter; and
6) Requiring the State Board of Education to report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the act, including the creation, composition, and function of an advisory committee; charter school application process; a profile of applicants and the basis for acceptance or rejection; and resources required at the State level for implementation of the current charter school laws.

North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board (Senate Bill 337)

In July 2013, the North Carolina General Assembly passed Senate Bill 337 reforming several components of charter school law. The main provision of the law repealed the Charter School Advisory Council and created the North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board, which will make recommendations to the State Board of Education on the adoption of rules related to charter schools. Members of the Advisory Board are appointed by the General Assembly, Governor, State Board of Education, and Lieutenant Governor. Under the law, charter schools can no longer choose to be accountable to their Local Board of Education instead of the State Board of Education. Information the State Board of Education receives from the Local Board of Education does not have to be considered in reviewing a charter application. The law also mandates that fifty percent of teachers must be licensed and all charter school teachers teaching a main subject (mathematics, science, social studies, language arts) must be college graduates.

NC Charter School Advisory Board Members (2016)

First Name	Last Name	City	Appointed By
Steven	Walker	Raleigh	Lt. Governor
Tammi	Sutton	Gaston	Governor
Hilda	Parlèr	Wake Forest	Governor
Joseph	Maimone	Mooresboro	Governor
Sherry	Reeves	Oriental	Senate
Phyllis	Gibbs	Greensboro	Senate
Alan	Hawkes	Greensboro	Senate
Alex	Quigley	Durham	House
Eric	Sanchez	Henderson	House
Tony	Helton	Forest City	House

Charter School Enrollment and Charter Revisions (House Bill 250)

Several elements of charter school enrollment were addressed in this bill, passed in July 2013. The major provision of the law stated that "charter schools must attempt to reasonably reflect the racial and ethnic makeup of the general local population or the special population served by the school."

Virtual Charter Schools

Section 8.35 of the Appropriations Act of 2014 authorized the creation of two pilot K-12 virtual charter schools. The length of the pilot was set for 4 years. The maximum enrollment in each pilot was capped at 1,500 students in the first year, rising to 2,592 in year four. North Carolina Virtual Academy, managed by K12, Inc., and North Carolina Connections Academy, affiliated with Connections Education, opened in Fall 2015.

Nationally, virtual schools operated by these same two companies have generated significant controversy. The Tennessee Virtual Academy, operated by K12, Inc., was ordered to close in April 2015 due to continual low performance, though a court order later permitted the school to remain open for at least one more year. A 2015 Stanford University study found that virtual charter school students lost an average of 72 days' worth of learning in reading and a year's worth of learning in math compared to their peers in traditional brick-and-mortar schools.[15]

Charter Renewal and Other Charter Law Changes (House Bill 334)

In 2015, House Bill 334 was passed, making it more difficult for authorizers to refuse to renew schools' charters by making renewal the default, in contrast to the law it replaced, which required charter schools to earn renewal through solid academic performance. Other states that have gone down this path, including Ohio, Texas, and Utah, have suffered declines in charter school accountability and performance. The same bill shifted some control and oversight responsibilities for charter schools away from NC DPI.

Current North Carolina Charter Schools By County

Charter Name	County	Year Open
North Carolina Connections Academy	N/A – Virtual	2015
North Carolina Virtual Academy	N/A – Virtual	2015
Clover Garden	Alamance	2001
River Mill Acad.	Alamance	1998
The Hawbridge School	Alamance	1998
Crossnore Academy	Avery	1999
Grandfather Academy	Avery	1997
Washington Montessori Public Charter School	Beaufort	2000
Paul R. Brown Leadership Academy	Bladen	2013
Charter Day School	Brunswick	2000
South Brunswick Charter School	Brunswick	2014
ArtSpace Charter School	Buncombe	2001
Evergreen Community Charter School	Buncombe	1999
Francine Delany New School for Children	Buncombe	1997
Invest Collegiate (Buncombe)	Buncombe	2014
The Franklin School of Innovation	Buncombe	2014

[15] Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) (2015). *Online Charter School Study 2015*. Stanford, CA: Author.

The New Dimensions School	Burke	2001
A.C.E. Academy	Cabarrus	2014
Cabarrus Charter Academy	Cabarrus	2013
Carolina International School	Cabarrus	2004
Tiller School	Carteret	1998
Chatham Charter School	Chatham	1997
The Woods Charter School	Chatham	1998
Willow Oak Montessori	Chatham	2013
The Learning Center	Cherokee	1997
Pinnacle Classical Academy	Cleveland	2013
Columbus Charter School	Columbus	2007
Flemington Academy	Columbus	2013
Alpha Academy	Cumberland	2000
The Capital Enroce Academy	Cumberland	2014
Water's Edge Village School	Currituck	2012
Carter Community Charter School, Inc.	Durham	1998
Excelsior Classical Academy CFA	Durham	2015
Global Scholars Academy	Durham	2011
Healthy Start Academy	Durham	1997
The Institute of Development of Young Leaders	Durham	2013
Kestrel Heights School	Durham	1998
KIPP Durham College Preparatory	Durham	2015
Maureen Joy Charter School	Durham	1997
NC Virtual Academy	Durham	2015
North Carolina Connections Academy	Durham	2015
Reaching All Minds Academy	Durham	2014
Research Triangle Charter Academy	Durham	1999
Research Triangle High School	Durham	2012
The Central Park School for Children	Durham	2003
Voyager Academy	Durham	2007
North East Carolina Prep	Edgecombe	2012
Arts Based School	Forsyth	2002
Forsyth Academies	Forsyth	1999
Quality Education Academy	Forsyth	1997
The Carter G. Woodson School of Challenge	Forsyth	1997
The N.C. Leadership Academy	Forsyth	2013
Crosscreek Charter (formally A Child's Garden)	Franklin	2001
Youngsville Academy	Franklin	2015
Mountain Island Charter	Gaston	2010
Piedmont Community School	Gaston	2000
Falls Lake Academy	Granville	2013
Oxford Preparatory High School	Granville	2013
Cornerstone Charter Academy	Guilford	2012
Greensboro Academy	Guilford	1999
Guilford Preparatory Academy	Guilford	2001
Phoenix Academy Inc.	Guilford	2000
Summerfield Charter Academy	Guilford	2013
The Community Preparatory and Leadership Academy: A Challenge Foundation Academy	Guilford	2012
The College Preparatory and Leadership Academy of High Point	Guilford	2012
Triad Math and Science Academy	Guilford	2008
KIPP Halifax College Preparatory	Halifax	2014
Anderson Creek Club Charter School	Harnett	2014
Shing Rock Classical Academy: CFA	Haywood	2015
The Mountain Community School	Henderson	1999

American Renaissance School	Iredell	1999
Langtree Charter Academy	Iredell	2013
Pine Lake Preparatory	Iredell	2007
Success Institute	Iredell	2000
Summit Charter School	Jackson	1997
Neuse Charter School	Johnston	2007
The Children's Village Academy	Lenoir	1997
Lincoln Charter School	Lincoln	1998
Bear Grass Charter School	Martin	2012
Aristotle Preparatory: A Challenge Foundation Academy	Mecklenburg	2013
Bradford Preparatory School	Mecklenburg	2014
Charlotte Lab School	Mecklenburg	2015
Charlotte Learning Academy	Mecklenburg	2014
Charlotte Choice Charter	Mecklenburg	2013
Charlotte Secondary School	Mecklenburg	2007
Community School of Davidson	Mecklenburg	2004
Commonwealth High School	Mecklenburg	2014
Corvian Community School	Mecklenburg	2012
Crossroads Charter High	Mecklenburg	2001
Invest Collegiate Transform	Mecklenburg	2013
Kennedy School	Mecklenburg	1998
KIPP Charlotte	Mecklenburg	2007
Lake Norman Charter	Mecklenburg	1998
Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy	Mecklenburg	2000
Pioneer Springs Community School	Mecklenburg	2014
Socrates Academy	Mecklenburg	2005
Sugar Creek Charter School	Mecklenburg	1999
The Community Charter School	Mecklenburg	1997
Thunderbird Preparatory School	Mecklenburg	2014
Stewart Creek High School	Mecklenburg	2015
Queen City STEM School	Mecklenburg	2015
Queen's Grant Community Schools	Mecklenburg	2002
United Community School	Mecklenburg	2014
VERITAS Community School: A Challenge Foundation Academy	Mecklenburg	2015
Sandhills Theatre Arts Renaissance School (STARS)	Moore	1999
The Academy of Moore County	Moore	1997
Rocky Mount Prep. School	Nash	1997
Douglass Academy	New Hanover	2013
Cape Fear Center for Inquiry	New Hanover	2000
Island Montessori	New Hanover	2013
Wilmington Preparatory Academy	New Hanover	2007
Gaston College Preparatory (GCP)	Northampton	2001
Z.E.C.A. School of Arts and Technology	Onslow	2013
Orange Charter School	Orange	1997
The Expedition School	Orange	2014
Arapahoe Charter School	Pamlico	1997
Northeast Academy of Aerospace & Advanced Technologies	Pasquotank	2015
Bethel Hill Charter School	Person	2000
Roxboro Community School	Person	2006
Winterville Charter Academy	Pitt	2015
Uwharrie Charter Academy	Randolph	2013
CIS Academy	Robeson	1997
Southeastern Academy	Robeson	2013
Bethany Community Middle School	Rockingham	2000

Lake Lure Classical Academy	Rutherford	2010
Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy	Rutherford	1999
Gray Stone Day School	Stanly	2002
Millennium Charter Academy	Surry	2000
Mountain Discovery Charter	Swain	2002
Brevard Academy: A challenge Foundation Academy	Transylvania	1998
Union Academy	Union	2000
Henderson Collegiate	Vance	2010
Vance Charter School	Vance	1999
Casa Esperanza Montessori	Wake	2003
Cardinal Charter	Wake	2014
East Wake Academy	Wake	1998
Endeavor Charter School	Wake	2008
Envision Science Academy	Wake	2014
The Exploris School	Wake	1997
Hope Charter Leadership Academy	Wake	2001
Longleaf School of the Arts	Wake	2013
Magellan Charter School	Wake	1997
PAVE Southeast Raleigh Charter School	Wake	2015
PreEminent Charter School	Wake	2000
Quest Academy	Wake	1999
Raleigh Charter High School	Wake	1999
Southern Wake Academy	Wake	2000
Sterling Montessori Academy	Wake	1997
The Franklin Academy	Wake	1998
Torchlight Academy	Wake	1999
Triangle Math and Science Academy	Wake	2012
Wake Forest Charter Academy	Wake	2014
Haliwa-Saponi Tribal	Warren	2000
Two Rivers Community School	Watauga	2005
Dillard Academy	Wayne	1998
Bridges Academy	Wilkes	1997
Sallie B. Howard School	Wilson	1997
Wilson Preparatory Academy	Wilson	2014

Source: NC DPI Office of Charter Schools Directory. Available at http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/charterschools/schools/.

2015-16 Charter Enrollment by County

LEA	2016 Charter membership	2016 LEA Allotted ADM for Traditional Public School	Charter Membership as % of LEA
Alamance-Burlington	1,241	22,724	5.2%
Alexander	9	5,175	0.2%
Alleghany	1	1,442	0.1%
Anson	13	3,526	0.3%
Ashe	16	3,151	0.5%
Asheboro City	173	4,775	3.5%
Asheville City	363	4,413	7.6%
Avery	46	2,114	2.1%
Beaufort	335	7,027	4.6%
Bertie	243	2,453	9.0%

Bladen	278	4,708	5.6%
Brunswick	1,002	12,659	7.3%
Buncombe	1,534	24,975	5.8%
Burke	257	12,620	2.0%
Cabarrus	1,743	31,249	5.3%
Caldwell	49	12,037	0.4%
Camden	1	1,900	0.1%
Carteret	217	8,495	2.5%
Caswell	195	2,751	6.6%
Catawba	169	16,714	1.0%
Chapel Hill-Carrboro	143	12,203	1.2%
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	15,535	149,554	9.4%
Chatham	968	8,448	10.3%
Cherokee	175	3,290	5.1%
Chowan	28	2,207	1.3%
Clay	21	1,329	1.6%
Cleveland	908	15,148	5.7%
Clinton City	-	3,080	0.0%
Columbus	606	6,045	9.1%
Craven	179	14,325	1.2%
Cumberland	855	50,780	1.7%
Currituck	25	3,933	0.6%
Dare	9	4,992	0.2%
Davidson	156	19,680	0.8%
Davie	8	6,345	0.1%
Duplin	13	9,952	0.1%
Durham Public	5,947	34,168	14.8%
Edgecombe	951	5,865	14.0%
Elkin City	23	1,256	1.8%
Forsyth	2,716	54,471	4.7%
Franklin	915	8,668	9.5%
Gaston	1,849	31,442	5.6%
Gates	3	1,657	0.2%
Graham	4	1,190	0.3%
Granville	944	8,051	10.5%
Greene	8	3,245	0.2%
Guilford	5,307	71,917	6.9%
Halifax	879	2,989	22.7%
Harnett	324	20,725	1.5%
Haywood	254	7,376	3.3%
Henderson	437	13,787	3.1%
Hertford	14	3,008	0.5%
Hickory City	12	4,511	0.3%

Hoke	300	8,902	3.4%
Hyde	1	593	0.2%
Iredell	1,834	31,442	5.6%
Jackson	248	3,782	6.2%
Johnston	957	34,765	2.7%
Jones	4	1,144	0.3%
Kannapolis City	130	5,452	2.3%
Lee	19	10,153	0.2%
Lenoir	198	9,212	2.2%
Lexington City	4	3,047	0.1%
Lincoln	1,211	11,646	9.4%
Macon	48	4,442	1.1%
Madison	16	2,485	0.6%
Martin	396	3,372	10.5%
McDowell	30	6,347	0.5%
Mitchell	17	1,956	0.9%
Montgomery	120	4,103	2.8%
Moore	519	13,056	3.8%
Mooresville City	361	6,065	5.6%
Mt. Airy City	170	1,641	9.4%
Nash	938	15,868	5.6%
New Hanover	888	26,241	3.3%
Newton City	7	3,230	0.2%
Northampton	481	1,992	19.5%
Onslow	193	26,038	0.7%
Orange	518	7,526	6.4%
Pamlico	252	1,272	16.5%
Pasquotank	78	5,813	1.3%
Pender	21	8,978	0.2%
Perquimans	16	1,749	0.9%
Person	1,104	4,628	19.3%
Pitt	799	24,104	3.2%
Polk	120	2,286	5.0%
Randolph	565	17,924	3.1%
Richmond	17	7,548	0.2%
Roanoke Rapids City	172	2,951	5.5%
Robeson	349	23,465	1.5%
Rockingham	396	13,006	3.0%
Rowan	206	19,944	1.0%
Rutherford	1,064	8,387	11.3%
Sampson	4	8,685	0.0%
Scotland	15	5,997	0.2%
Stanly-Albemarle	240	8,670	2.7%

Stokes	116	6,440	1.8%
Surry	404	8,283	4.7%
Swain	97	2,083	4.4%
Thomasville City	22	2,404	0.9%
Transylvania	287	3,561	7.5%
Tyrrell	7	593	1.2%
Union	2,021	41,924	4.6%
Vance	1,124	6,480	14.8%
Wake	9,577	158,049	5.7%
Warren	162	2,342	6.5%
Washington	92	1,647	5.3%
Watauga	158	4,330	3.5%
Wayne	519	18,982	2.7%
Weldon City	195	945	17.1%
Whiteville City	245	2,241	9.9%
Wilkes	70	9,896	0.7%
Wilson	1,283	12,375	9.4%
Yadkin	63	5,430	1.1%
Yancey	6	2,238	0.3%
2016 State Total	**79,575**	**1,459,852**	**5.2%**

Source: NC DPI Charter School Membership By Region 2015-16.
Available at http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/fbs/resources/data/csmembersregion15-16.pdf.

INTRODUCTION TO MAGNET SCHOOLS

In contrast to charter schools, magnet schools are considered part of the traditional public school system, operating under the same local administration and local school board. The unique feature of magnet schools is that they have a focused theme and a curriculum aligned to that theme. Some of these themes include STEM, fine and performing arts, Montessori, and international studies. Students are still taught the complete range of subjects required by the state's curriculum, but teaching is tailored to the magnet school's theme.

Magnet schools first came into being in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a tool to further academic desegregation in large urban school districts. Magnets were intended to attract students from across different school zones. To accomplish this, magnet schools had to do two things. First, they had to open their enrollment to students outside their traditional school zones. Second, they had to provide an environment or experience that would attract students and families from other school zones. By encouraging enrollment rather than forcing enrollment, the hope was that families would voluntarily desegregate their children.[16]

The number of magnet schools has increased rapidly since federal court rulings accepted magnet programs as a method of desegregation in the mid-1970s. Between 1982 and 1991, the number of individual schools offering magnet programs nearly doubled and the number of students enrolling in these programs almost tripled. By the 1991-92 school year, more than 1.2 million students were enrolled in magnet schools in 230 school districts. In the 1999-2000 school year, 1,372 magnet schools operated in 17 of the 33 states that reported such information to the federal government. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

[16] Public School Review, What is a Magnet School? Available at http://www.publicschoolreview.com/articles/2.

reports that as of 2011, 2,722 magnet schools were in operation in the United States. The states with the most magnet schools are Michigan (464), Florida (414), California (282) and Texas (219).[17]

Students do not attend magnet schools based on the location of their home and zoned school boundaries as they do for traditional public schools. Interested students instead have to apply and are selected based on a lottery (within the school district) or prioritized criteria. Prioritized criteria often include an expressed interest in the theme of the magnet school or indicators of potential. Approximately one-third of magnet schools use academic performance as a selection criterion.[18]

Magnet schools tend to be mainly an urban phenomenon. According to U.S. Department of Education, more than half of large urban school districts have magnet school programs as compared to only 10% of suburban districts. Magnet schools exist at the elementary school, middle school, and high school levels.

Magnet schools often have a much more racially diverse student body than other schools in their districts because the students do not come solely from specific neighborhoods or geographic zones; however, students of low socioeconomic status tend to be underrepresented in magnet schools. Students who attend magnet schools are also more likely to live in two-parent households and to have parents who graduated from college than students who attend traditionally zoned public schools.[19]

Local districts finance magnet schools the same way they finance other public schools. However, magnet schools do have access to additional federal funds through the Magnet Schools Assistance program. The Magnet Schools Assistance program provides grants to eligible local educational agencies to establish and operate magnet schools that are operated under a court-ordered or federally approved voluntary desegregation plan. In FY 2015, the U.S. Department of Education earmarked over $91 million in grant funding through this program to magnet schools throughout the country.[20]

MAGNET SCHOOLS IN NORTH CAROLINA

There are 107 magnet schools in North Carolina serving 73,713 students.[21] The majority of these magnet schools are located in Wake and Mecklenburg counties, with 47 and 26 magnet schools respectively. In North Carolina, 70 percent of the students who attend magnet schools are minorities compared to the state average of 48 percent.[22]

The application process and criteria for magnet school admission varies by LEA. For example, in Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools, students who meet minimum entrance requirements for a school are selected through a lottery. In comparison, Wake County uses prioritized criteria to select students who meet the minimum entrance requirements. [23]

[17] National Center for Education Statistics. Available at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d12/tables/dt12_108.asp.
[18] Public School Review, What is a Magnet School?
[19] Public School Review, What is a Magnet School?
[20] U.S. Department of Education, Magnet School Assistance Program.
Available at http://www2.ed.gov/programs/magnet/index.html.
[21] Public School Review, North Carolina Magnet Public Schools.
Available at http://www.publicschoolreview.com/state_magnets/stateid/NC.
[22] Public School Review, North Carolina Magnet Public Schools.
[23] Wake County Magnet School Application Process. Available at http://www.wcpss.net/Page/189.

INTRODUCTION TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS

In contrast to charter and magnet schools, private schools are largely unaccountable to government institutions and are traditionally privately funded. Funding for private schools comes from a variety of sources including tuition, private grants, and fundraising from parents or private organizations. Students typically have to apply to be admitted to a private school. Private schools do not have to meet state-approved academic standards, make budgets public, adhere to open meetings and records laws, or publicly report student achievement. Private schools, however, must comply with health and safety regulations, anti-discrimination laws and laws stating the minimum number of school days.[24]

In the United States, a wide variety of schools are termed "private schools," including boarding schools and religiously-affiliated schools. According to the Private School Universe Survey, in the 2011-12 school year there were 30,861 private elementary and secondary schools in the United States serving 4,494,845 students, representing 10 percent of all students. Sixty-eight percent of private schools were religiously-affiliated, with the majority identified as Catholic, followed by Conservative Christian, Jewish, Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopal, Seventh-day Adventist, and Calvinist. In the 2011-12 school year, the racial makeup of private school students was 71 percent white, 10 percent Hispanic or Latino, 9 percent black or African-American, and 5 percent Asian. The majority of private schools operate in cities or suburban areas. Private schools in the United States have an average student to teacher ratio of 11:1.[25]

For the 2011-2012 school year, private school full tuition averages were $7,770 for elementary schools, $13,030 for secondary schools, and $13,640 for combined schools.[26]

PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN NORTH CAROLINA

In 2014-15, North Carolina private schools served 97,259 students at 720 schools.[27] Over 70 percent of these students attended religious schools. Private schools in NC are 50% male and 50% female. Racial data for private schools is not available from the NC Department of Administration's Division of Non-Public Education.

In 2015-16, the average NC private school tuition rates were estimated at $7,925 for elementary schools and $9,065 for high schools.[28]

Enrollment and Number of Private Schools in North Carolina in 2014-15

County	Enrollment	Number	County	Enrollment	Number
Alamance	1,384	8	Jones	0	0
Alexander	79	1	Lee	656	4
Alleghany	60	1	Lenoir	1,030	3
Anson	0	1	Lincoln	50	2
Ashe	0	0	Macon	67	2
Avery	63	2	Madison	33	2
Beaufort	338	3	Martin	0	0

[24] Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, School Choice FAQs. Available at http://www.edchoice.org/school_choice_faqs/are-participating-private-schools-held-accountable/.
[25] National Center for Education Statistics, Characteristics of Private Schools in the United States: Results From the 2011–12 Private School Universe Survey. Available at http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013316.pdf.
[26] US Department of Education, Statistics About Nonpublic Education in the United States. Available at http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oii/nonpublic/statistics.html.
[27] NC Department of Administration, 2015 North Carolina Private Schools Statistics. Available at https://ncdoa.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/documents/files/14-15CSStats.pdf.
[28] Private School Review, North Carolina Private Schools. Available at http://www.privateschoolreview.com/north-carolina.

Bertie	363	3	McDowell	174	2
Bladen	157	2	Mecklenburg	19,205	88
Brunswick	381	9	Mitchell	63	3
Buncombe	3,312	29	Montgomery	103	2
Burke	116	3	Moore	1,091	11
Cabarrus	1,915	9	Nash	1,149	7
Caldwell	146	2	New Hanover	3,016	25
Camden	0	0	Northampton	155	2
Carteret	370	6	Onslow	884	14
Caswell	0	0	Orange	1,174	8
Catawba	1,440	12	Pamlico	92	2
Chatham	136	3	Pasquotank	368	8
Cherokee	18	1	Pender	0	1
Chowan	0	1	Perquimans	0	0
Clay	43	1	Person	83	1
Cleveland	136	2	Pitt	2,055	16
Columbus	160	4	Polk	15	1
Craven	1,009	7	Randolph	774	9
Cumberland	4,152	27	Richmond	231	5
Currituck	15	1	Robeson	335	8
Dare	75	3	Rockingham	305	7
Davidson	1,151	8	Rowan	904	10
Davie	63	1	Rutherford	279	8
Duplin	116	5	Sampson	569	4
Durham	4,486	30	Scotland	276	3
Edgecombe	0	0	Stanly	471	5
Forsyth	4,494	24	Stokes	159	2
Franklin	26	2	Surry	77	2
Gaston	2,129	11	Swain	76	2
Gates	0	0	Transylvania	76	3
Graham	12	1	Tyrrell	0	0
Granville	20	1	Union	2,173	12
Greene	73	1	Vance	626	6
Guilford	6,383	36	Wake	16,932	78
Halifax	471	4	Warren	22	1
Harnett	386	8	Washington	0	0
Haywood	144	4	Watauga	84	2
Henderson	865	15	Wayne	1,225	10
Hertford	396	5	Wilkes	250	3
Hoke	82	4	Wilson	974	6
Hyde	38	1	Yadkin	47	2
Iredell	1,052	14	Yancey	73	3
Jackson	156	3			
Johnston	425	6	**TOTAL**	**97,259**	**720**

Source: NC Department of Administration, 2015 North Carolina Private Schools Statistics.

RECENT LEGISLATION AFFECTING PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN NORTH CAROLINA

VOUCHERS "OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIPS" (SENATE BILL 402)

Section 8.29 of Senate Bill 402 created a voucher program for students who met certain criteria and income thresholds to attend private schools beginning in the 2014-15 school year In 2015, following a legal challenge, the NC Supreme Court ruled that the program was constitutional, setting the stage for expansion of the program in 2015-16 and likely continued growth in the years ahead.[29]

The voucher program is overseen by the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (SEAA), whose primary mission is to oversee financial aid programs for postsecondary legislation. Under the legislation, for a child to be eligible, he or she must be a resident of North Carolina, have not graduated from high school, be at least five years old on or before August 31, have a household income that does not exceed 133% of the amount required to receive free or reduced lunch, and meet one of the following criteria:

- was a full-time student attending a North Carolina public school the previous semester;
- received a scholarship grant in the previous year;
- is entering kindergarten or first grade;
- is in foster care; or,
- adoption was finalized in the past year.

Nonpublic schools that accept students receiving scholarships must be regionally or nationally accredited and must agree to meet certain requirements. These requirements include providing tuition information to SEAA, conducting a criminal background check on the highest-ranking staff person, providing information to the scholarship recipient's parents on their progress, administering national grade level tests for third grade and above, disclosing test results and graduation rates for scholarship recipients, and conducting a financial review if grants received exceed $300,000.

In the wake of the 2015 NC Supreme Court ruling, the 2015 state budget added $6.8 million for vouchers in 2015-16 and $14 million in 2016-17. In 2016-17, total support for the state's voucher program will reach $24.8 million. This will fund approximately 6,000 vouchers at the maximum grant of $4,200 per year.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES SCHOLARSHIP GRANTS (HOUSE BILL 269)

Repealing the tax credit for children with disabilities and related fund for Special Education and Related Services, House Bill 269 creates a program called Special Education Scholarship Grants for Children with Disabilities that provides up to $3,000 per semester for eligible students to use for reimbursement of tuition and services. To receive a grant, a child with a disability must be under the age of 22, require an individualized education plan, and receive special education services on a daily basis. Eligibility is reviewed every three years by local educational agencies.

[29] News & Observer, NC Supreme Court upholds school voucher program.
Available at http://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/education/article28437271.html.
NC Supreme Court. Available at https://appellate.nccourts.org/opinions/?c=1&pdf=33175.

HOME SCHOOLING IN NORTH CAROLINA

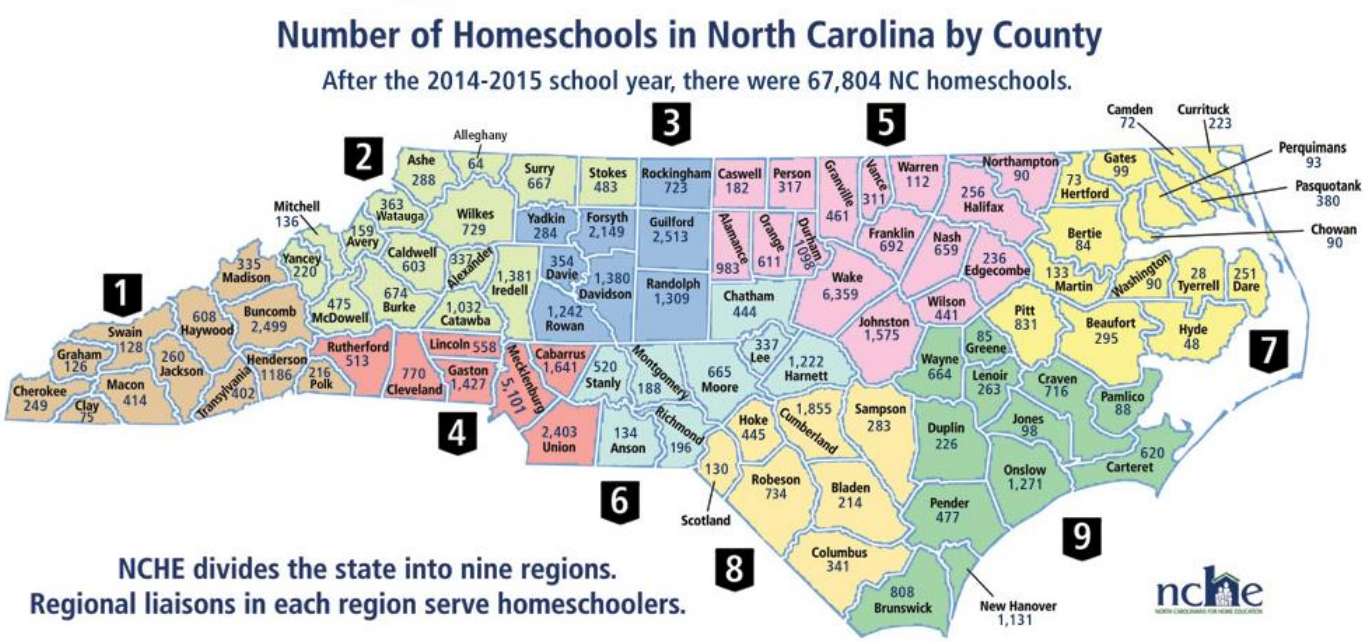
In the school year 2014-15, there were 67,804 home schools operating in North Carolina serving an estimated 106,853 students.[30] Of these schools, over 61 percent identify as religious schools and 39 percent identify as independent schools.

Because the Division of Non-Public Education does not record the number of students enrolled at each home school, the total home school enrollment is estimated by the number of home schools and the average number of children per household rate of 1.6. As seen in the table to the right, North Carolina home school students are spread over all ages.

Age	2014-15 Estimated NC Home School Enrollment
6	7,863
7	10,164
8	8,884
9	9,156
10	9.183
11	9,596
12	9,595
13	9,686
14	8,919
15	9,180
16	7,949
17	6,878
Total	**106,853**

Source: 2015 NC Home School Statistical Summary

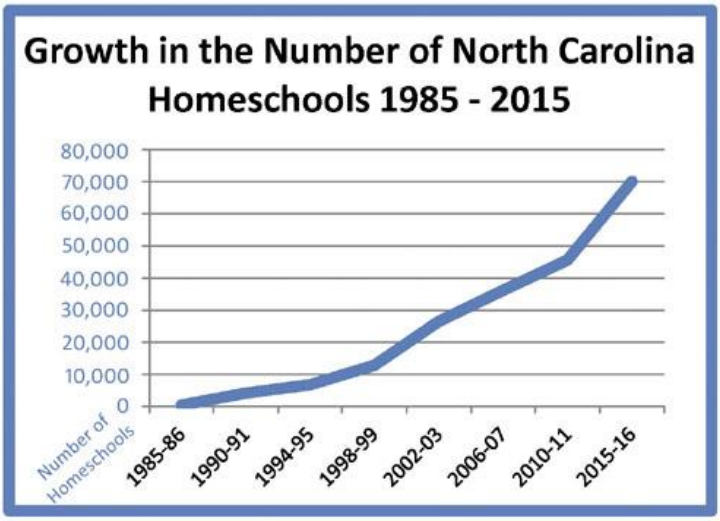
Parents or guardians residing in North Carolina with at least a high school diploma are permitted to home school their children if they submit a Notice of Intent to the North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education and agree to minimum requirements, including maintaining immunization records, administering a nationally standardized test each year that includes the subject areas of spelling, reading, English grammar, and mathematics, and operate "on a regular schedule, excluding reasonable holidays and vacations, during at least nine calendar months of the year." Home schools in North Carolina are required to elect to operate as either non-religious or religious schools under Part 1 or 2 of Article 39 in the NC General Statutes.



Source: North Carolinians for Home Educations, Statistics. Available at http://www.nche.com/stats.

[30] NC Department of Administration, 2015 North Carolina Home School Statistical Summary. Available at http://ncdoa.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Documents/hhh240.pdf.

Home schools have grown dramatically over the last 20 years. January 1988, there were an estimated 1046 homeschools in North Carolina. Since then, the number of homeschools in North Carolina has grown at an annual growth rate of more than 16%. In August 2015, North Carolinians for Home Education estimated there were more than 70,000 home schools in North Carolina.[31]



Source: North Carolinians for Home Educations, Statistics.

RECENT LEGISLATION REGARDING HOME SCHOOLS

The NC General Assembly passed legislation in 2013 amending the definition of home school. SB 189 amended the definition to allow parents, legal guardians, or members of the household to determine the scope and sequence of academic instruction, provide academic instruction, and determine additional sources of academic instruction for the children in the home school.

[31] North Carolinians for Home Educations, Statistics.

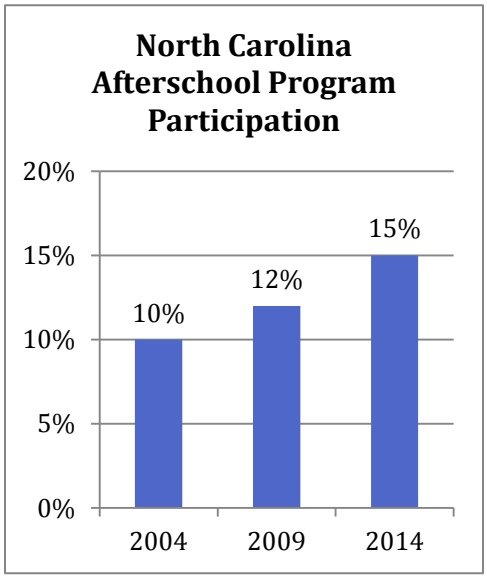
EXPANDED LEARNING

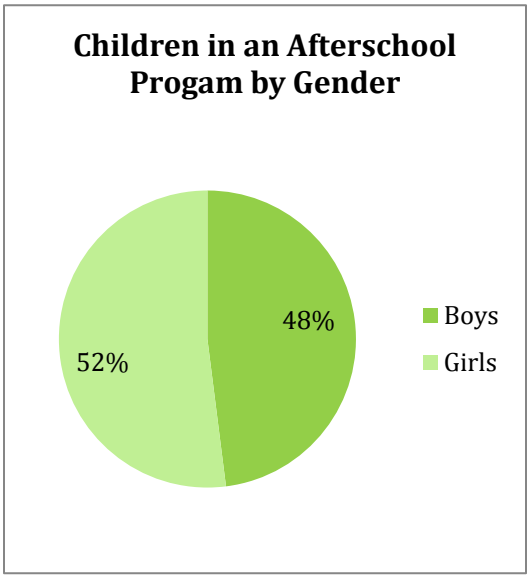
KEY ISSUES

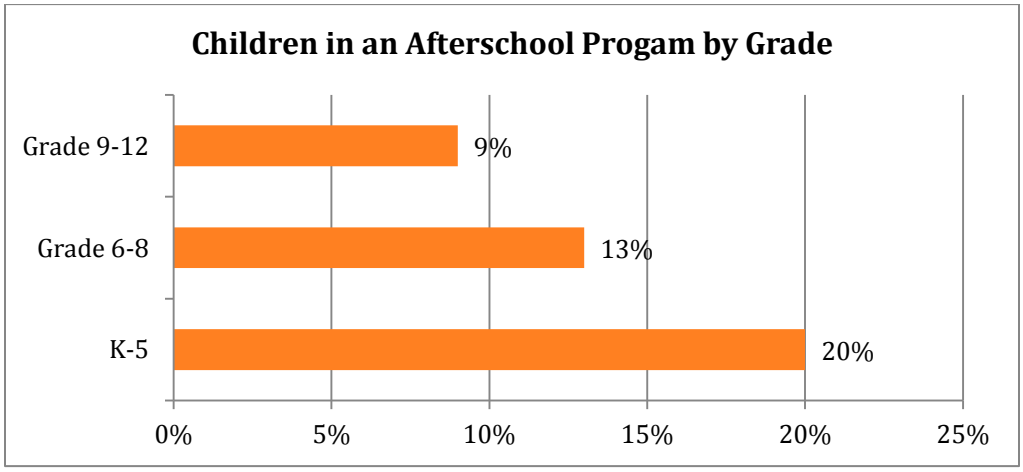
Expanded learning programs have a proven ability to contribute greatly to a child's education and overall wellbeing. National and state research shows that quality afterschool and expanded learning programs have potential for significant positive impacts in society.

North Carolina has seen a steady increase in afterschool program participation during the past 10 years. However, unmet demand for afterschool programs continues to grow. Nearly 2 in 5 children (more than half a million children) not in an afterschool program would be enrolled in a program if one were available to them.

QUICK LOOK: CHILDREN IN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS 2014[1]







[1] Afterschool Alliance,, America After 3PM: North Carolina. Available at http://afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/detail.html#s/NC/demand/p_of_children_in_programs_2014.

EXPANDED LEARNING & AFTERSCHOOL INVOLVEMENT

Expanded learning programs are opportunities for children before school, after school, on weekends and during summers, including community programs such as those provided by the YMCA or Boys & Girls Clubs, community-based programs, faith-based programs, and school-led programs.

In 2014, 10.2 million K-12 children participated in afterschool programs in the United States. In addition, parents of 19.4 million children said they would participate in afterschool programs if a quality program were available in their community. Approximately 11.3 million of school-age children are on their own after school.[2]

North Carolina is often touted as one of the leading states for its high quality expanded learning programs. Below are statistics regarding afterschool and expanded learning in North Carolina.

- 15% (234,908) of North Carolina's K-12 children participate in afterschool programs, including 31,709 students in programs supported by the U.S. Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the only federal program dedicated exclusively to afterschool.[3]
- Approximately 39% (523,140) of children not currently in afterschool programs would likely participate if they had access to a quality program in their community.
- 55% of North Carolina children in an afterschool program qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program.
- On average, children spend 6.03 hours and 3.59 days per week in an afterschool program.
- 51% of afterschool programs in North Carolina are located in a public school building.

BENEFITS OF EXPANDED LEARNING & AFTERSCHOOL: A WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT

Expanded learning and afterschool programs capture many benefits, for students and parents, but also for society as a whole. Students in expanded learning programs often see multiple benefits, including improvements in children's personal, social and academic skills as well as their self-esteem.[4] Additionally, the Promising Afterschool Programs Study found that regular participation in high-quality afterschool programs is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits as well as reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students.[5] For example, a 2.5 year evaluation found that PROJECT LEARN (a program of the Boys & Girls Clubs) participants increased their overall grade point average by 11 percent and increased their spelling grade point average by 22 percent.[6]

There are broader gains to families and communities when quality expanded learning programs are in place, specifically in the areas of economic development and safety & crime prevention. In North Carolina, eighty percent of parents agree that afterschool programs help them keep their jobs.[7] Without child supervision during afterschool hours, parents miss an average of eight days of work. On a national scale, this added stress

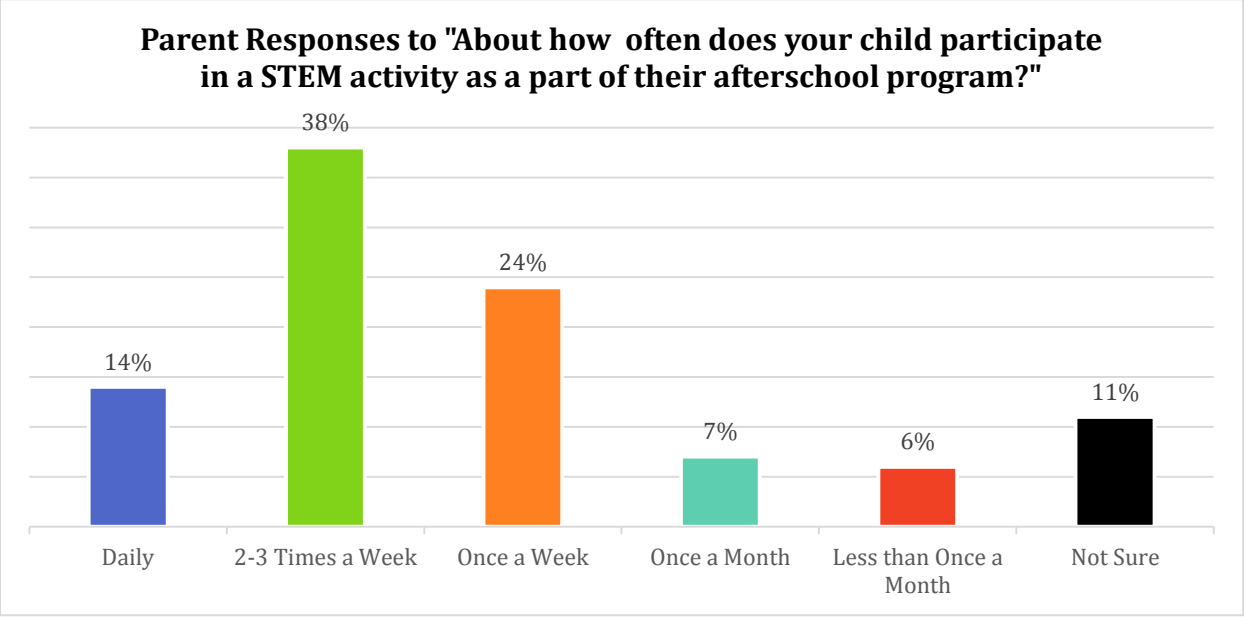
[2] Afterschool Alliance,, America After 3PM.
Available at http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2014/AA3PM_National_Report.pdf.
[3] Afterschool Alliance,, America After 3PM: North Carolina.
Available at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2014/NC-AA3PM-2014-Fact-Sheet.pdf.
[4] Study completed by The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2007, cited at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/candidate_guide%20final.pdf.
[5] Study completed by University of California at Irvine, 2007, cited at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/candidate_guide%20final.pdf.
[6] National Youth Development Information Center, 2005, *Making a Difference in the Lives of Youth.*
[7] Afterschool Alliance, America After 3PM: North Carolina.

can cost businesses up to $300 billion annually in lost productivity.[8] For many children, expanded learning programs offer care and supervision; many of these youth would otherwise be unsupervised. Expanded learning programs provide gang and drug prevention initiatives, and access to mentors. The hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. are the peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and sex.[9] Afterschool programs have been shown to decrease incidence of teen pregnancy and increase graduation rates.

Beyond the economic advantages of parents remaining at work and students better prepared to enter the work force due to their afterschool involvement, investment in afterschool programming is a significant cost-savings for society. According to data from the Afterschool Alliance, teenage mothers cost society approximately $8 billion annually in increased welfare costs and lost tax revenue, and high school dropouts earn 24 percent less over their lifetime than high school graduates. It is estimated that every taxpayer dollar invested in afterschool programs saves $3 on future law enforcement and social services expenses.[10]

STEM IN EXPANDED LEARNING & AFTERSCHOOL

Afterschool programming has been identified as an essential component of supporting the growth of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) education in schools. Because school time is relatively small compared to a child's total experience, afterschool and expanded learning programs are a significant way to increase a student's exposure to and interaction with STEM at an early age. Afterschool programs have the unique position and ability of supplementing what children are learning in the classroom and connecting it to experiences in the world. In an afterschool setting, students can explore STEM principles in a hands-on learning environment that is open to discovery and not tied to fear of academic failure.



Source: Afterschool Alliance, Full STEM Ahead: Afterschool Programs Step Up as Key Partners in STEM Education. Available at www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/STEM.pdf.

[8] Community, Families and Work Program at Brandeis University, 2004; Catalyst & Brandeis University, 2006, cited at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/candidate_guide%20final.pdf.
[9] Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2002.
[10] Afterschool Alliance, 2012 Candidate Guide. Available at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/candidate_guide%20final.pdf.

Forty-five percent of children in afterschool programs are offered science learning opportunities. Technology and engineering offerings in afterschool programs are much lower. According to the Afterschool Alliance, parents reported the highest rate of technology and engineering programs are in middle school at 36 percent, whereas elementary school students had the least opportunity at 26 percent.

SUMMER LEARNING LOSS

Summer learning loss is an important issue facing our public schools. According to a survey administered by the National Summer Learning Association, two-thirds of the teachers polled spend at least a month reviewing old material at the start of the school year.[11] This leads to the loss of valuable learning time in the classroom and the loss of critical skills over a summer. Summer programs, as a component of expanded learning programs, are one of the best strategies to combat this phenomenon.

Furthermore, students from low-income families are more likely than their peers from higher-income families to experience learning loss over the summer. Studies have also shown that part of the achievement gap between students of different income levels is due to the differences in learning rates over the summer. In a Johns Hopkins study, researchers found that summer learning loss was responsible for about two-thirds of the 9th grade achievement gap between low-income and more advantaged students.[12] Students are also more likely to experience a summer drop in mathematical skills than in literary skills.

In North Carolina, 32% of families report at least one child is in a summer learning program, and 55% of families say they want their children enrolled in a summer learning program. In fact, 76% of parents agree that summer activities help maintain academic skills.[13]

THE COST OF AFTERSCHOOL AND FUNDING SOURCES

According to a recent study by the Wallace Foundation, with all expenses considered, the cost of running an afterschool program during the school year for elementary and middle school students averages to $7.40/hour per child. For high school, the cost is an average of $10.30/hour per child. On average, the annual full cost per child for afterschool programming is $4,320.[14] A study conducted by the Wallace Foundation and the RAND corporation found that a high quality summer learning program costs between $1,330 and $2,801 per child for a six-hour-a-day, five-week program.[15]

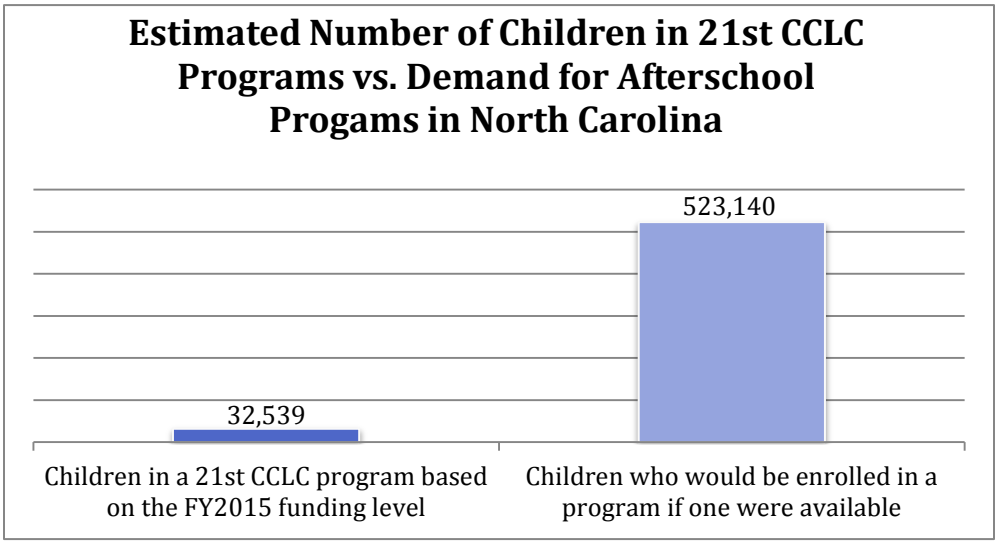
21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) federal program serves students in high-poverty communities across the country by giving them the opportunity to participate in academic enrichment and youth development programs. Centers do this by providing a wide range of activities including but not limited to tutoring, supplemental educational services, homework help, recreational activities, career training, drug

[11] Education Week, After Summer, Teachers Spend a Month Reteaching Students. Available at http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/beyond_schools/2013/06/after_summer_teachers_spend_a_month_re-teaching_students.html.
[12] Education Week, Programs Found to Stem Summer Learning Loss and Boost Achievement. Available at http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/time_and_learning/2014/10/students_struggling_the_most_in.html.
[13] Afterschool Alliance, America After 3PM: North Carolina.
[14] Wallace Foundation, The Cost of Quality Out-of-School-Time Programs. Available at http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/key-research/Documents/The-Cost-of-Quality-of-Out-of-School-Time-Programs.pdf.
[15] Education Week, After Summer, Teachers Spend a Month Reteaching Students.

and violence prevention programs, expanded library service hours, community service, and youth leadership activities.

The 21st CCLC is the only federal funding source in North Carolina specifically devoted to before school, afterschool, and summer learning programs. In FY 2014, $30,382,826 was appropriated to 21st CCLC in North Carolina.



Source: Afterschool Alliance, Afterschool by the Numbers in North Carolina. Available at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/NC-afterschool-facts.pdf

Child Care & Development Fund

In addition to 21st CCLC, the federal government provides funding for the Child Care & Development Fund (CCDF) which provides vouchers or subsides for low-income parents to pay for childcare including preschool, before school, after school and summer care for children age 6 to 12. The total amount provided by the federal government for CCDF was $6.08 billion. President Obama's most recent 2016 budget proposed an additional $82 billion over 10 years in mandatory funding to CCDF that will be necessary to promote greater access to quality afterschool programs.[16] In North Carolina, $266,800,568 was provided for CCDF funds in FY2014.[17]

North Carolina After-School Quality Improvement Grant Program

In the summer of 2014, The North Carolina General Assembly appropriated five million dollars ($5,000,000) in state funds for the After-School Quality Improvement Grant Program to be administered by the Department of Public Instruction as part of the Competitive Grants to Improve After-School Services Act [S.L. 2014-100].

Organizations are eligible to receive two-year grants of up to five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000) a year, based on the proposed number of students served, with an option for a third year of funding. To determine the level of funding eligibility, organizations utilized the Wallace Foundation Out-of-School Time Cost Calculator and the NC Department of Commerce's 2014 Tier Designations. In accordance with the law,

[16] Afterschool Alliance, Afterschool by the Numbers in North Carolina.
[17] Afterschool Alliance, Afterschool by the Numbers in North Carolina.

grant funds must be matched on the basis of three dollars ($3.00) in grant funds for every one dollar ($1.00) in non-grant funds. For 2014-15, 41 applications were submitted by the due date. Based on the final ratings for the applications, 17 were approved by the State Board of Education on January, 2015, for a total of $4,784,539.

On September 9, 2015, the General Assembly appropriated six million dollars ($6,000,000) in state funds through S.L. 2015-241 to provide a second-year grant to grant recipients approved under the After-School Quality Improvement Grant Program pursuant to Section 8.19 of S.L. 2014-100. Sufficient funds were appropriated to allow the State to fund the 4 program proposals representing the next four highest scores in rank order within the strong quality band for a total of $1,108,480.[18]

NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

The North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs (NC CAP), a program of the Public School Forum of North Carolina, represents over 6,000 afterschool programs serving more than 150,000 children and youth across the state. NC CAP unites a collaborative of over 35 partners to address issues including quality, accessibility and sustainable funding for afterschool programs.

Quality and Standards: NC CAP has assessed the way programs within the state and across the country are best serving children and youth, and has developed standards, quality indicators, and self-assessment tools to help all North Carolina afterschool programs provide the best quality programming possible.

Professional Development System-Building: Through numerous statewide surveys over the years, professional development for the afterschool field continues to be reported as a priority need. NC CAP worked with state and local organizations to establish a comprehensive, incentivized afterschool professional development system to improve the quality of practitioners while being affordable, accessible and practical. Connected to its quality and standards initiatives, NC CAP's Afterschool Professional Development Group released tiered core competencies for staff that provide a framework of the knowledge and skills needed for professional development in the field of afterschool care.

"3 to 6" Campaign: The 3 to 6 campaign builds public will by raising awareness about the importance of afterschool programs by focusing on the hours of 3pm to 6pm. In addition to raising public awareness, goals of the campaign include influencing policy to build and sustain funding for out-of-school time programs, engaging state and local politicians, and building and empowering local afterschool coalitions.

STEM: NC CAP is partnering with the state's key leaders in STEM to advance opportunities for STEM education in afterschool programs and other out-of-school time settings.

Annual Conference: NC CAP's annual SYNERGY conference reaches 500 afterschool directors, front-line staff, state administrators, and funders from across the state with over 30 workshops and networking opportunities.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

More information about afterschool and expanded learning programs and expanded learning can be found at:
www.afterschoolalliance.org
www.nccap.net

[18] NC DPI, After-School Quality Improvement Grant Program. Available at http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/program-monitoring/after-school/.

TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL LEARNING

KEY ISSUES

Keeping pace with technological developments is a daunting challenge for public schools. Many students and some teachers are "digital natives" whose lives outside of school are deeply impacted by the use of technology. In many school systems, by contrast, technology is peripheral at best. Used well, technology can be a tremendous support to teaching and learning, particularly with new and improved tools being released all the time. But technology can also be costly and susceptible to unrealistic hype and inefficient use. Schools struggle with the challenges of accessing modern technologies, financing telecommunications infrastructure, vetting the numerous content options available, and incorporating technology into classroom practice to enhance student learning.

Technology in public schools includes computers, digital learning, and interactive video, all of which can be used as the sole or primary vehicles for delivering content to students. Technology can also be used in combination with traditional face-to-face instruction, which is often referred to as "blended learning." Distance learning and virtual learning enable students from all over the state, nation, and world, particularly those living in remote areas, to interact with teachers via various technological channels. Such options may be particularly useful in smaller schools because they give students access to sophisticated course offerings and content expertise that might otherwise be found only in larger, more comprehensive schools.

INTRODUCTION

The shift to elements of a digital-age learning model was one of the Public School Forum's Top 10 Education Issues in 2015.[1] As we noted then:

North Carolina has recently pioneered numerous advances of technology for public schools. Providing computers and high-speed Internet access for students, offering online courses to students across the state, transitioning student data onto more advanced platforms, and preparing teachers to integrate technology into the classroom are just a few of the ways North Carolina is working to expand and improve the use of technology in schools.

Implementation of the state's Race to the Top grant has crystallized North Carolina's status as a leader in education technology. Examples of recent state-led initiatives, many of which were made possible by Race to the Top funding, include the School Connectivity and K-12 Cloud Computing initiatives; the North Carolina Virtual Public School, the nation's second largest state virtual school with over 55,000 enrollments in 2014-15; Home Base, which enables access to student data and learning resources by teachers, students, parents, and administrators; and the North Carolina School of Science and Math's online program focused on high school science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) courses.

North Carolina has also been a visionary leader in education technology through the state's e-Learning Commission, the State Board of Education's Strategic Plan, the work of the House Study Committee on Education Innovation, and the efforts of numerous businesses, universities, and nonprofit organizations. North Carolina also maximizes the benefits of the federal E-Rate program, which helps make telecommunications and information services more affordable for schools by providing discounts for eligible services. Many North Carolina districts and charter schools have pushed the envelope on innovative uses of

[1] Public School Forum of North Carolina, *Top 10 Education Issues 2015*. Available at https://www.ncforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/PSF_TopTenEducationIssues_v5_web.pdf.

technology as well. For example, Mooresville Graded School District is routinely referenced as a national model for effective use of education technology.

Recent legislation set in motion a transition from textbooks to digital materials, and called for the development of digital teaching and learning standards for teachers and administrators. The legislature also made it a requirement that every student take at least one online course. And legislative leaders and the State Board have agreed on the need for statewide standards and plans related to wireless connectivity and broadband capacity.

To move its digital learning priorities forward, the state contracted with the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State University to develop the North Carolina Digital Learning Plan, a comprehensive effort to envision and prepare for the transition to digital-age education. The transition will involve "changes in instructional practices, new types of educational resources, changes in classroom and school management, revised school staffing models, enhanced school and district technology infrastructure, Internet connected devices for all students and teachers, and educator training and support tailored to specific district and charter deployments."[2]

FEDERAL LEGISLATION ON TECHNOLOGY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

As a part of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) set up the Schools and Libraries Program (commonly known as "E-rate") funded by the Universal Service Fund. The purpose of E-rate is to make telecommunications and information services more affordable for schools and libraries by providing discounts for eligible telecommunications, telecommunication services, internet access, and internal connections. The discount ranges from twenty to ninety percent, with schools or libraries in high poverty or rural areas receiving higher discounts. This program works through a competitive bid process for the desired service and the reimbursement of funds to eligible applicants through the Universal Service Administrative Company. Since the beginning of the program, demand for services has exceeded the cap all but one year. In 2013, schools and libraries in the US sought approximately $4.9 billion in funding, more than double the 2013 cap of $2.4 billion.[3]

In 2014, the FCC adopted the E-rate Modernization Order and the Second E-rate Modernization Order as part of a comprehensive review to modernize the program. In the Second E-rate Modernization Order, the FCC increased the cap for the E-rate program to $3.9 billion in funding year 2015, indexed to inflation going forward. In the E-rate Modernization Order, the FCC refocused the program from legacy services to broadband by setting a target of $1 billion in support for category two services (internal connections, managed Wi-Fi, and basic maintenance) to expand Wi-Fi to more than 10 million students in funding year 2015. The Order also phased down support for voice services by 20 percentage points each funding year and eliminated support for non-broadband, legacy services. Category one services (telecommunications, telecommunications services and Internet access services) will still be ensured funding. Funding is allocated first to the highest poverty schools and libraries, then the next highest poverty applicants, and continues down the list of applicants.[4]

Enacted by Congress in 2000, the Children's Internet Protection Act requires schools to have an internet safety policy if they receive E-rate funds. The internet safety policy must include the blocking of any content considered to be obscene, pornographic, or harmful to minors. Schools must also monitor the online activities

[2] The Friday Institute for Educational Innovation, *North Carolina Digital Learning Plan: Policy Brief*.
[3] Federal Communications Commission, FAQs on E-Rate Program for Schools and Libraries. Available at http://www.fcc.gov/guides/universal-service-program-schools-and-libraries.
[4] Federal Communications Commission, FAQs on E-Rate Program for Schools and Libraries.

of minors and, as included in the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act, educate minors about appropriate online behavior.[5]

The most comprehensive federal program supporting education technology in elementary and secondary schools is the Enhancing Education Through Technology Act of 2001. The program's purpose is to increase technology access, technology-related teacher professional development, technology integration, and student technology literacy. It is specifically targeted to "high-need school districts" as defined by the number or percent of low-income students in the district or districts in substantial need for assistance in obtaining technology.[6]

NORTH CAROLINA DIGITAL LEARNING PLAN

In September 2015, the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation submitted the North Carolina Digital Learning Plan to the North Carolina State Board of Education—Department of Public Instruction. The Plan spotlighted activity, recommendations, and goals in six areas:

1. Technology infrastructure and devices
2. Human capacity
3. Content, instruction, and assessment
4. Local digital learning initiatives
5. Policy and funding
6. Regional and state support systems[7]

These six remain the key areas for development and investment in 2016. Proposed legislation and budgetary provisions since the release of the Digital Learning Plan have continued to reflect state leaders' desire to prioritize investments in infrastructure, professional learning programs that enable the transition to digital-age teaching and learning, cooperative purchasing, and flexible policies. The detailed Plan and additional background can be found at http://ncdlplan.fi.ncsu.edu.

HOME BASE

Home Base is a statewide, instructional improvement (IIS) and student information system (SIS) for teachers, students, parents and administrators. Home Base was introduced in the 2013-14 school year and replaced NC WISE as the technology platform for data collection and monitoring. Teachers use Home Base to access student data and teaching and learning resources. Students can access their schoolwork, grades, and learning activities. Parents are able to view their child's attendance and progress, and administrators can monitor data on students, teachers and schools.

NORTH CAROLINA VIRTUAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS (NCVPS)

The North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS) is the nation's second largest state-led virtual school with over 55,000 enrollments in the 2014-15 school year in all 115 North Carolina school districts. NCVPS offers over 150 secondary school courses online to students across the state, including course offerings in advanced placement, electives, traditional, honors, core, STEM, occupational course of study, and credit recovery courses. NCVPS began in 2007-08 and has served over 321,000 student enrollments since that first year.

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[5] Federal Communications Commission, Children's Internet Protection Act. Available at http://www.fcc.gov/guides/childrens-internet-protection-act.

[6] US Department of Education. Available at http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/tech/netts/finalreport.pdf.

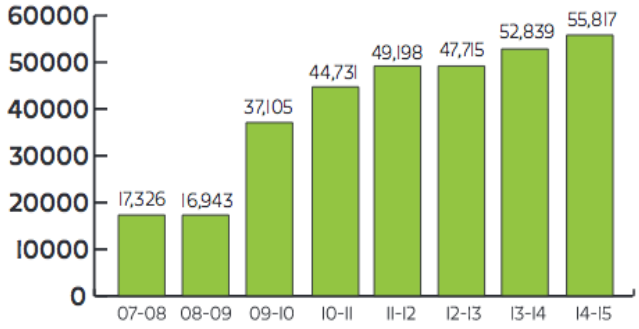
[7] Friday Institute for Educational Innovation, *North Carolina Digital Learning Plan Summary*. Available at http://ncdlplan.fincsu.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2015/09/NCDLP_Summary8.31.15.pdf.

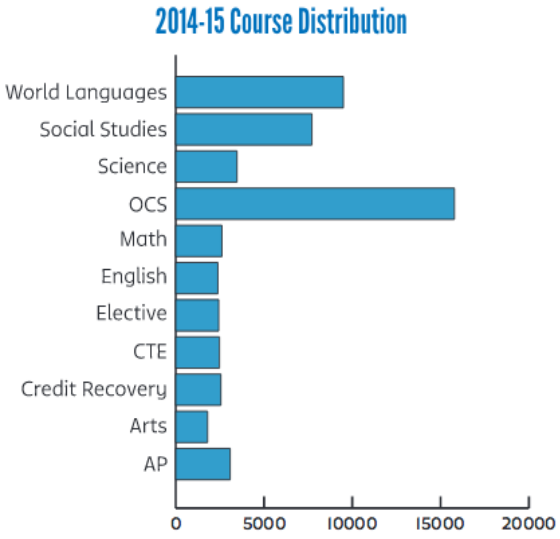
NCVPS is committed to closing the achievement gap between well-funded and poorly-funded school systems by providing access to world class learning opportunities for all North Carolina students. The NCVPS mission is to provide skills, student support, and opportunities for 21st century learners to succeed in a globally competitive world. The courses utilize Blackboard course management software to maximize student interaction in each class. NCVPS courses are taught by highly qualified teachers who employ video, interactive whiteboards, wikis, active worlds, and online discussion tools to engage 21st century learners.

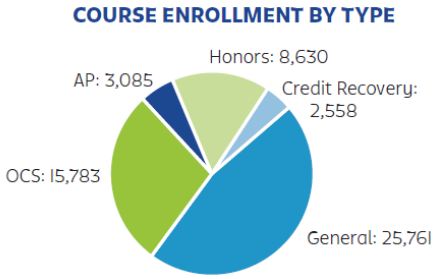
The purpose of NCVPS is to provide courses that students are unable to take at their local schools and therefore enhance their learning experience. All courses are taught by certified teachers with experience in the subject matter. Once the online course is completed, the student receives credit on his or her school transcript from the student's participating school.

Initially, NCVPS courses were only offered to high school students. However, in recent years, course offerings have been made available for middle school students as well. In 2008, NCVPS added Learn and Earn Online. The Learn and Earn Program allows students in rural or low-wealth areas to be linked directly with universities to receive advanced instruction and earn up to two years of college credit while still in high school.

2014-15 North Carolina Virtual Public School Enrollment







NCVPS Numbers "To Know"	
Pass Rate	83.1%
2014-2015 Course Enrollments	55,817
2014-15 Unique Students Enrolled	35,966

NCVPS PERCENTAGE OF ALL ENROLLMENTS FOR ADM GRADES 6-12
2014-2015 SCHOOL YEAR

Based on ADM projections and enrollments for NCVPS funding formula published in 2014.
Enrollments reported include multiple enrollments by unique students.

Source: North Carolina Virtual Public School 2014-15 Annual Report.
Available at http://www.ncvps.org/wp-content/uploads/2014-15_NCVPS-AnnualReport.pdf.

2014-15 North Carolina Virtual Public School Student Performance

According to the NCVPS 2014-2015 Annual Report:[8]

- Total Enrollment for 2014-2015 was 55,817 course enrollments.
- Total Student Participation for 2014-15 was 35,966 students.
- 115 LEAs participated in NCVPS online courses.
- 61 charter schools participated in NCVPS online courses.
- Per student teacher pay for 2014-2015 was $390 per year.
- The pass rate for students taking NCVPS courses in 2014-2015 was 83.1%.
- 46.2% of the students enrolled in NCVPS courses registered for General courses, 28.3% for Occupational Course of Study (OCS) blended courses, 15.5% for Honors courses, 4.6% for Credit Recovery courses, and 5.5% for Advanced Placement courses.
- The most popular NCVPS courses for 2014-2015 were OCS blended courses, world language courses, social studies courses, and science courses.
- The districts with the most NCVPS enrollments were Charlotte-Mecklenburg (6,947), Wake County Schools (5,707), New Hanover (2,751), Charter Schools (2,281), Cumberland County (1,848), and Cabarrus County (1,694).

North Carolina School of Science and Math Online

North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM) Online offers a supplemental, two-year, sequenced honors program that provides the NCSSM experience to students enrolled at their local schools.

[8] North Carolina Virtual Public School 2014-15 Annual Report. Available at http://www.ncvps.org/wp-content/uploads/2014-15_NCVPS-AnnualReport.pdf.

NCSSM Online, begun in 2008, provides valuable preparation for college along with a learning community of accomplished, motivated peers.[9]

- **Institution.** North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics is a constituent campus of the University of North Carolina system.
- **Degree Type.** The online program provides an honors recognition certificate and option for an academic concentration. The residential program provides a high school diploma. Both programs provide a transcript.
- **Coursework.** Students take NCSSM Online courses outside of school or dual enroll the courses with their local school. Students take 1-2 courses per semester and earn a certificate for meeting program requirements. Shorter Accelerator and seminar courses explore special topics such as mechanatronics, neuroscience research, and the research process.
- **Cost.** The program is tuition free. Special course fees, transportation costs, and technology access outside of home are the responsibility of the student/family. Some costs are waived for students meeting financial need eligibility.
- **Students**. The NCSSM Online Program serves 11th and 12th grade students. The Class of 2015 represented 55 counties throughout North Carolina.
- **Faculty**. Faculty hold advanced degrees in their content area of expertise and teach advanced courses in a college-like environment.
- **Size**. 115 students made up the NCSSM Online Class of 2015.
- **SAT**. The entering class of 2017 has mean SAT scores of 612 (Math), 592 (Critical Reading), and 568 (Writing).

Recent School Legislation Regarding Technology

Digital Learning Competencies (S.L. 2013-11, House Bill 23)

The NC General Assembly passed HB 23 in its 2013 session requiring the State Board of Education to develop digital teaching and learning requirements for school administrators and students in school administrator preparation programs. These requirements must be met by school administrators to renew their license beginning July 1, 2017. This bill is meant to ensure high quality digital teaching and learning is provided to North Carolina students.

Transition to Digital Learning in Schools (S.L. 2013-12, House Bill 44)

The NC General Assembly passed HB 44 in March 2013, with the intent to transition from funding for textbooks, both traditional and digital, to funding for digital materials, including textbooks and instructional resources, to provide educational resources that remain current, aligned with curriculum and effective for all learners by 2017.

Transition to Personalized Digital Learning (House Bill 660, 2015-16 Session)

This bill, passed by the House in 2015, would prepare for the next phase of the state's digital learning work, moving from the development of a comprehensive plan to the nuts and bolts of a major transition, including:

- Expanding the School Connectivity Initiative to improve schools' technology infrastructure
- Establishing a collaborative procurement service for districts

[9] NC School of Science and Mathematics Online. Available at http://www.ncssm.edu/online-program.

- Improving access to digital learning resources to help schools move to digital curriculum materials by 2017 as required under current law
- Providing professional development for educators leading digital learning initiatives
- Creating a grant program to support development and dissemination of digital learning models

The bill would establish the North Carolina Digital Learning Initiative at the Friday Institute to support this work.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

KEY ISSUES

In North Carolina, and nationally, there are strong advocates on both sides of the debate regarding lengthening the school calendar to provide additional instructional time.

Advocates for lengthening the school calendar suggest more instructional time will lead to improved student performance. Nationally, the United States mandates less instructional time for students than many other industrialized countries. More than half of all states mandate 180 days of instruction per year, while other industrialized nations routinely provide at least 210 days of instruction per year, and countries like India and Japan provide 240 days or more of instruction per year.

Opponents of a longer calendar typically point to employers' reliance on low-cost student labor during the summer months, economic benefits of increased tourism (more time out of school arguably translates to more and/or longer vacations), and costs of keeping schools open longer, including additional dollars spent on personnel costs for additional days.

While traditional public schools operate on an August to June school calendar, alternative schedules are becoming a growing trend, both in North Carolina and throughout the country.

HISTORICAL LOOK AT THE NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL CALENDAR

Prior to 2012, North Carolina had maintained a 180-day school year for decades. North Carolina's 180-day school year reflected the state's agrarian roots: young people were needed to harvest crops in the summer. Therefore, schools were closed during the peak-growing season. While the economy has shifted away from traditional agriculture, the tradition of summer vacation has remained.

CURRENT SCHOOL CALENDAR POLICY

In 2012, the North Carolina legislature increased the state's minimum to 185 instructional days, up from 180. This is higher than all but two other states: New York (190 days) and Kansas (186). Over half of all states mandate 180 days. Adjustments to the School Calendar in G.S. 115C-84.2, beginning in the 2013-14 school year, include:

- 185 days or 1025 hours of instruction covering at least nine calendar months. This applies to traditional public schools and charter schools.
- Requirement that schools open no earlier than the Monday closest to August 26 and close no later than the Friday closest to June 11.
- On a showing of "good cause," (schools in an LEA closed for eight days per year during any four of the past 10 years due to severe weather conditions) the State Board may allow the LEA to set an opening day no earlier than the Monday closest to August 19. Partial days due to inclement weather, such as delayed starts or early closings no longer count toward good cause waivers.
- Elimination of educational waivers that had previously allowed counties to avoid providing the additional 5 days of instruction.
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools participating in the public-private partnership Project LIFT and their feeder schools will be exempt from the mandated start and end dates.
- Have a minimum of ten (10) annual vacation leave days.

- Must have at least nine (9) teacher workdays. Local Boards shall designate two (2) workdays on which teachers may take accumulated vacation leave. Local Boards may designate the remaining workdays as days teachers may take accumulated vacation leave.[1]

Comparison Of U.S. States

Since education policy is largely left to state discretion, each state determines the number of school days for each calendar year. While the majority of states require 180 days of student instruction, variance exists between states. Many states also specify a minimum number of hours that constitutes a full instructional day. In North Carolina, 5.5 hours of instructional time must be completed in order to be counted as a full school day. North Carolina schools must have 185 days or 1025 instructional hours in a school year.

Minimum Instructional Days per Year in Each State

State	Minimum Instructional Days/Year	State	Minimum Instructional Days/Year
Alabama	180	Montana	N/A
Alaska	180	Nebraska	N/A
Arizona	180	Nevada	180
Arkansas	178	New Hampshire	180
California	180/175 for Charters	New Jersey	180
Colorado	160	New Mexico	N/A
Connecticut	180	New York	190
Delaware	N/A	North Carolina	185
District of Columbia	180	North Dakota	175
Florida	180	Ohio	N/A
Georgia	180	Oklahoma	180
Hawaii	180	Oregon	N/A
Idaho	N/A	Pennsylvania	180
Illinois	180	Rhode Island	180
Indiana	180	South Carolina	180
Iowa	180	South Dakota	N/A
Kansas	186	Tennessee	180
Kentucky	170	Texas	180
Louisiana	177	Utah	180
Maine	175	Vermont	175
Maryland	180	Virginia	180
Massachusetts	180	Washington	180
Michigan	175	West Virginia	180
Minnesota	165	Wisconsin	N/A
Mississippi	180	Wyoming	175
Missouri	174		

Source: Education Commission of the States2013 Collection, Number of Instructional Days/Hours in the School Year. Available at http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Number-of-Instructional-Days-Hours-in-a-School-Year_Revised.pdf.

[1] NC DPI. Legislation Summary for LEAs. Available at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/fbs/accounting/calendar/.

COMPARING THE UNITED STATES TO OTHER NATIONS

Country	Days Spent in School Per Year
Japan	243
South Korea	220
Israel	216
Luxembourg	216
The Netherlands	200
Scotland	200
Thailand	200
Hong Kong	195
England	192
Hungary	192
Swaziland	191
Finland	190
New Zealand	190
Nigeria	190
France	185
United States	180

Source: OECD 2011

Research suggests that the amount of time spent in schools can dramatically impact the learning process. While young people in the United States attend school an average of 180 days per year, their counterparts in other industrialized nations routinely attend schools for an average of 210 days a year. Research finds that young people, especially young people from low-income homes, make learning gains when given more instruction.[2]

These findings have led many school systems to experiment with extended school days and expanded learning for young people. Some schools are engaging students in community-led afterschool activities; others are using traditional faculty to work with small numbers of students in after-school tutorial programs.

THE NATION AT RISK REPORT OF 1983

Historically, the need, and thus the debate, for additional time in school has been around for over thirty years. The A *Nation at Risk* report, issued under President Ronald Reagan's administration in 1983 recommended additional time as one of its main recommendations for school improvement.

"We recommend that significantly more time be devoted to learning the New Basics. This will require more effective use of the existing school day, a longer school day, or a lengthened school year."[3]

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REPORT

1. Longer and more learning intensive homework assignments for high school students.
2. Instruction in effective study and work skills starting in the early grades and continued throughout the student's schooling.
3. Lengthening the school day to 7-hours and the school year to 200-220 days.
4. Improved classroom time management, allowing additional time for special needs of slow learners.
5. Firm and fair codes of student conduct should be enforced consistently with alternative classrooms and programs developed to meet the needs of continually disruptive students.
6. Attendance policies with clear sanctions to reduce the amount of time lost through student absenteeism and tardiness.

[2] The Wallace Foundation, Summer and Expanded Learning Time. Available at http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/summer-and-extended-learning-time/pages/default.aspx.
[3] A Nation at Risk. Available at http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/risk.html.

7. Reduction of administrative burdens on the teacher to allocate additional time for teaching and learning.
8. Academic progress and instructional needs, rather than age level, should guide placement and grouping of students.

ALTERNATIVE SCHEDULES

Alternative scheduling has become a popular form of education reform in recent years. As issues over school crowding, student performance, and other concerns rise, many school systems in North Carolina and around the nation are implementing scheduling alternatives, such as year-round schools and block scheduling, as solutions.

YEAR-ROUND SCHOOLS

According to a report from the Center for American Progress[4], young children can lose more than two months of reading and math skills during the summer months, with the greatest learning loss occurring among low-income children. Year-round school schedules attempt to combat this learning loss. Varying models exist for year-round schools, but typically, the year-round calendar divides the school year into sections so that students attend school for 45 days and then have 15 consecutive days off. The students, therefore, attend school throughout the entire year, but are not actually in school for more days than they would be on a traditional schedule.

In year-round schools, students are often assigned to one of the "tracks" in the school with each track having a slightly different schedule. If a school has four tracks, for example, students in three of them would be in session while students in the fourth would be on break.

A year-round school can have significant advantages, including:

- A more continuous learning process without a long summer break lessens the need for extensive review at the beginning of the school year.
- Three-week break periods allow schools to offer remedial and enrichment activities.
- More students can be served in a single building using “tracks,” which can ease the burden of serving large student populations, particularly in high growth areas.

Currently, year-round models are in place at the elementary and middle school level across North Carolina. Year-round high schools are limited for several reasons including the fact that many high school programs must coordinate scheduling with other schools (for such activities as competitions in athletics, music, etc.). This coordination could be quite difficult if all schools were not following similar schedules.

Current research is inconclusive about whether year-round schools impact student achievement. The results vary from classroom to classroom, and school to school. Whether or not the year-round school model increases student performance, more school districts dealing with declining tax revenues, overcrowding, and low capital funds are considering moving to year-round schedules.

[4] Center for American Progress, Expanded Learning Time in Action. Available at https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2008/07/pdf/elt1.pdf.

BLOCK-SCHEDULING

Block scheduling has been adopted at an increasing rate by schools across the nation. A block schedule allocates 90-minute periods of time for basic course work, rather than the traditional 45-minute class period. Therefore, a block schedule has fewer, but longer classes, per instruction day. One of the more popular forms of block scheduling is the 4x4 schedule where students take four 90-minute courses each semester and then enroll in four different 90-minute courses the following semester. This allows students to take eight courses each year, rather than six under the traditional schedule. A 1997 Department of Public Instruction survey of high school principals cited several reasons for changing from the traditional schedule to the block schedule, including:

- Greater variety of academic courses
- Increased time for teachers and students to focus on a more limited number of courses
- Teachers have more planning time to prepare lessons plans and concentrate their teaching methods

While principals, teachers, and students have reported being pleased with many of the aspects of block scheduling, research is inconclusive on whether the new schedule structure increases student performance on state tests.

SCHOOL SAFETY

KEY ISSUES

The total number of reportable crimes in North Carolina was 10,347 in 2014-15. That total increased from 2013-14, but has slowly been decreasing over the last few years.

In 2013 a series of legislation was enacted in North Carolina to ensure our schools are safe for our students and teachers. The recent increased presence of school violence in national media has heightened a sense of urgency to make schools a safe place.

When faced with behavior problems in students, schools rely on discipline policies to restore order to classrooms. Suspensions, expulsions, and detentions are some of the discipline options schools use to discourage problem behavior, but minimizing behavior problems is an ongoing concern for schools.

The difference in suspension and expulsion rates among race and gender requires us to consider what factors are leading to these differences and what supports need to be provided to ensure that all students are able to stay in school and prepare for their careers and futures.

INTRODUCTION

Ensuring schools are safe places to learn is the responsibility of parents, administrators, teachers, and policymakers. School personnel regularly address behavior issues that disrupt classrooms and decide on how to discipline students to discourage the behavior and restore a focused learning environment. In recent years the numbers of expulsions and suspensions have decreased in North Carolina, but the effort to maintain positive school cultures with minimal behavior problems is an ongoing battle in schools. Increasing media accounts of acts of violent crime across the U.S. has heightened public fears of school violence. School violence and crime has been proven to have adverse effects on the health and well-being of students and educational goals.[1] Studies show that incidences of victimization at schools can increase teacher turnover rates, lead students to change schools, incentivize early retirement for teachers and principals, impede the learning process, and foster greater student fear of violence at school.[2]

QUICK FACTS ON SCHOOL VIOLENCE:

- During the 2013-14 school year, 65 percent of public schools across the U.S. recorded that one or more incidents of violence had taken place, amounting to an estimated 757,000 crimes.[3]
- In 2014, there were about 850,100 nonfatal victimizations at schools nationally. This includes 363,700 theft victimizations and 486,400 violent victimizations.[4]
- In North Carolina the number of reportable crimes in grades K-13 increased by 2.1% during the last year, from 10,132 acts in 2013-14 to 10,347 acts in 2014-15.[5]

[1] Fredland, N.M. (2008). "Nurturing Hostile Environments: The Problem of School Violence." *Family & Community Health*, 31 (1): S32–S41.
[2] Crews, K., Crews, J., and Turner, F. (2008). "School Violence Is Not Going Away So Proactive Steps Are Needed." *College Teaching Methods & Styles Journal*, 4 (1): 25–28
[3] National Center for Education Statistics, Indicators of School Crime and Safety. Available at http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2015072.
[4] National Center for Education Statistics, Indicators of School Crime and Safety.
[5] NC DPI, Consolidated Data Report 2014-15. Available at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/research/discipline/reports/.

It is clear that school violence has severe effects on students, teachers, and the learning process. Improving school safety is necessary for ensuring optimum student performance and creating a safe and stable learning environment.

VIOLENCE IN NORTH CAROLINA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In North Carolina, there were 10,347 reported crimes in 2014-15. The table below shows the total acts of violence and rate for the last nine years.

Reporting Year	Total Acts	Acts Per 1000 Students
2014-15	10,347	6.9
2013-14	10,132	6.8
2012-13	10,630	7.2
2011-12	11,161	7.6
2010-11	11,657	8.0
2009-10	11,608	8.0
2008-09	11,116	7.6
2007-08	11,276	7.9
2006-07	11,013	7.8

Source: NC DPI, Consolidated Data Report 2014-15

The table below shows the number of reportable crimes in 2013-14 and in 2014-15. North Carolina public schools are using a number of strategies to reduce crime, including surveillance and the presence of school resource officers.

Acts	Number of Acts 2013-14	Number of Acts 2014-15
Possession of a Controlled Substance in Violation of Law	4,478	4,672
Possession of a Weapon	2,812	3,052
Assault of School Personnel	1,333	1,272
Possession of Alcoholic Beverage	1,007	950
Sexual Assault not including Rape or Sexual Offense	179	105
Possession of a Firearm or Powerful Explosive	88	86
Bomb Threat	66	78
Assault Involving Use of a Weapon	47	49
Assault Resulting in Serious Injury	49	43
Sexual Offense	65	28
Burning of a School Building	5	8
Robbery with a Dangerous Weapon	3	1
Rape	0	1
Kidnapping	0	1
Taking Indecent Liberties with a Minor	0	1
Death by Other Than Natural Causes	0	0
TOTAL	**10,132**	**10,347**

Source: NC DPI, Consolidated Data Report 2014-15

The number of reportable crimes by high school students increased by 6.8%, from 5,475 in 2013-14 to 5,847 in 2014-15. The rate of crimes reported increased to 13.19 acts per 1000 students in 2014-15 compared to 12.37 acts per 1000 students in 2013-14. The next table lists the number of reportable crimes for high school grades only during the 2014-15 school year.

TOTAL NUMBER OF REPORTABLE CRIMES IN GRADES 9-13 BY SCHOOL DISTRICT IN 2014-15

School District	Reportable Crimes	ADM Grades 9-13	Reportable Crime Rate (per 1000 students)
Alamance-Burlington	79	6872	11.50
Alexander County	7	1563	4.48
Alleghany County	4	429	9.32
Anson County	18	1034	17.41
Ashe County	10	921	10.86
Avery County	8	644	12.42
Beaufort County	40	2139	18.70
Bertie County	2	772	2.59
Bladen County	13	1398	9.30
Brunswick County	87	3807	22.85
Buncombe County	167	7710	21.66
Asheville City	33	1339	24.65
Burke County	75	4073	18.41
Cabarrus County	61	9353	6.52
Kannapolis City	19	1431	13.28
Caldwell County	32	3852	8.31
Camden County	5	593	8.43
Carteret County	23	2635	8.73
Caswell County	9	775	11.61
Catawba County	95	5268	18.03
Hickory City	21	1229	17.09
Newton Conover City	11	1018	10.81
Chatham County	57	2434	23.42
Cherokee County	1	1058	0.95
Edenton/Chowan	10	641	15.60
Clay County	3	368	8.15
Cleveland County	91	4697	19.37
Columbus County	5	1932	2.59
Whiteville City	5	721	6.93
Craven County	36	4064	8.86
Cumberland County	249	15459	16.11
Currituck County	11	1208	9.11
Dare County	5	1410	3.55
Davidson County	89	6070	14.66
Lexington City	7	768	9.11
Thomasville City	12	673	17.83
Davie County	17	1916	8.87
Duplin County	37	2801	13.21
Durham Public	189	9966	18.96
Edgecombe County	9	1785	5.04
Forsyth County	188	16105	11.67
Franklin County	25	2522	9.91
Gaston County	84	9627	8.73
Gates County	2	515	3.88
Graham County	3	364	8.24

Granville County	49	2628	18.65
Greene County	24	1014	23.67
Guilford County	339	23036	14.76
Halifax County	13	764	17.02
Roanoke Rapids City	3	901	3.33
Weldon City	2	335	5.97
Harnett County	76	5839	13.02
Haywood County	37	2169	17.06
Henderson County	39	4106	9.50
Hertford County	12	843	14.23
Hoke County	37	2218	16.68
Hyde County	2	159	12.58
Iredell-Statesville	75	7014	10.69
Mooresville City	14	1764	7.94
Jackson County	11	1135	9.69
Johnston County	96	9890	9.71
Jones County	0	321	0.00
Lee County	62	2939	21.10
Lenoir County	39	2658	14.67
Lincoln County	63	3633	17.34
Macon County	13	1301	9.99
Madison County	8	807	9.91
Martin County	4	873	4.58
McDowell County	42	1879	22.35
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	624	40675	15.34
Mitchell County	3	629	4.77
Montgomery County	17	1147	14.82
Moore County	68	4046	16.81
Nash-Rocky Mount	45	4833	9.31
New Hanover County	92	7699	11.95
Northampton County	7	503	13.92
Onslow County	76	6925	10.97
Orange County	25	2435	10.27
Chapel Hill-Carrboro	60	3675	16.33
Pamlico County	2	472	4.24
Pasquotank County	7	1642	4.26
Pender County	25	2710	9.23
Perquimans County	13	517	25.15
Person County	25	1306	19.14
Pitt County	89	6948	12.81
Polk County	5	717	6.97
Randolph County	87	5456	15.95
Asheboro City	15	1283	11.69
Richmond County	19	2274	8.36
Robeson County	135	6820	19.79
Rockingham County	84	3960	21.21
Rowan-Salisbury	66	5960	11.07
Rutherford County	36	2561	14.06
Sampson County	15	2521	5.95
Clinton City	4	829	4.83

Scotland County	32	1787	17.91
Stanly County	49	2475	19.80
Stokes County	21	2136	9.83
Surry County	36	2647	13.60
Elkin City	0	390	0.00
Mount Airy City	3	523	5.74
Swain County	12	584	20.55
Transylvania County	37	1120	33.04
Tyrrell County	0	163	0.00
Union County	146	12552	11.63
Vance County	18	1977	9.10
Wake County	562	45134	12.45
Warren County	23	732	31.42
Washington County	0	448	0.00
Watauga County	15	1341	11.19
Wayne County	45	5511	8.17
Wilkes County	36	2984	12.06
Wilson County	48	3709	12.94
Yadkin County	43	1729	24.87

Source: NC DPI, Consolidated Data Report 2014-15, Table C4

SUSPENSIONS IN NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In North Carolina, principals have discretion to use several different types of disciplinary measures that remove students from the classroom for varying periods of time:

1. **Short term in-school suspensions or short-term out-of-school suspensions**: suspension lasting up to 10 days for lesser offenses committed by students.
2. **Long-term out-of-school suspensions**: suspension for a serious offense lasting anywhere from 11 days to the remainder of the academic year. For a very serious offense, a student can be suspended for an entire calendar year (365-day suspension). School Superintendents and/or local schools boards often assist the principal in making decisions about long-term suspensions.
3. **Expulsion**: student is permanently removed from the school and cannot return to the home school or another school in the district.

Approximately one out of thirteen North Carolina students received at least one out-of-school short-term suspension in 2014-15. Short-term out-of-school suspensions and expulsions increased in 2014-15 compared with the previous year, while long-term suspensions decreased slightly from the previous year.[6]

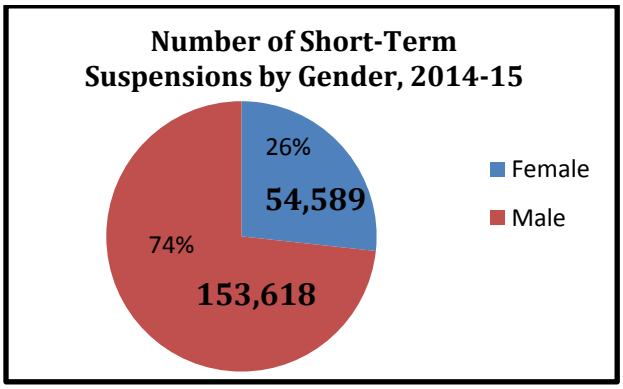
School Suspensions and Expulsions, Trends 2013-14 to 2014-15

Category	2013-14	2014-15	Change
Short-term suspensions	198,254	208,650	Increased 5.2%
Long-term suspensions	1,088	1,085	Decreased 0.3%
Expulsions	37	42	Increased 13.5%

Source: NC DPI, Consolidated Data Report 2014-15

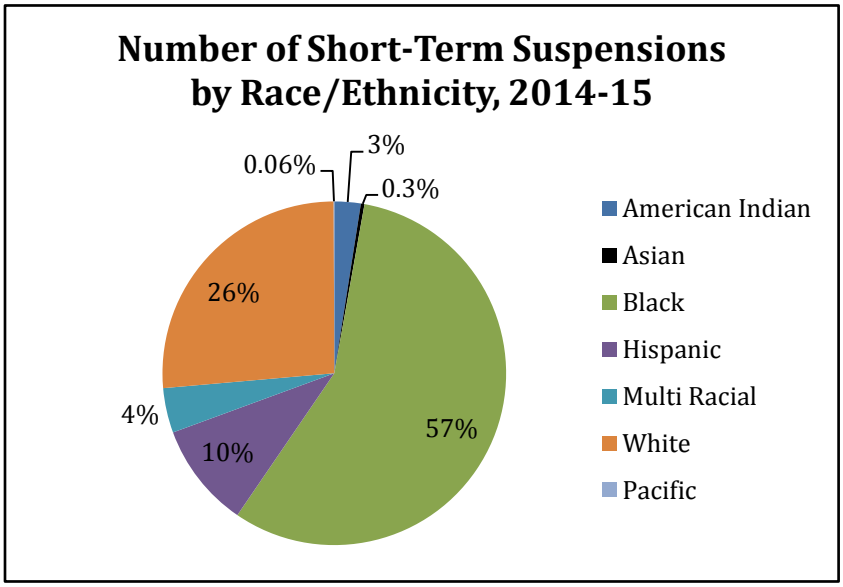
[6] NC DPI, Consolidated Data Report 2014-15.

In 2014-15, male students, black and American Indian students, ninth graders, and students receiving special education services were disproportionately represented among suspended students. For example, the number of short-term suspensions for male students in 2014-15 was 2.8 times higher than for females.[7] The graphs below represent disproportionalities among suspended and expelled students in North Carolina.



Gender in North Carolina's schools is close to 50% male, 50% female. When it comes to suspensions and expulsions, 74% of disciplinary action is directed toward males.

Source: NC DPI, Consolidated Data Report 2014-15



Number of Short-Term Suspensions by Race/Ethnicity, 2014-15	
American Indian	5,158
Asian	707
Black	118,105
Hispanic	20,532
Multi Racial	8,768
White	54,812
Pacific	123

Source: NC DPI, Consolidated Data Report 2014-15

In 2014-15 the number of short-term suspensions increased for black, Hispanic, multiracial, and white students. The number of short-term suspensions decreased for American Indian, Asian, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students. As in previous years, black students had the highest rate of short-term suspension in 2014-15, followed by American Indian students.[8]

[7] NC DPI, Consolidated Data Report 2014-15.
[8] NC DPI, Consolidated Data Report 2014-15.

National Efforts to Combat Crime & Violence in Schools

In the past decade, numerous school violence incidents have escalated national concern over school safety. As a result, the Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS) was created after the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001 within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education in United States Department of Education to address school safety issues across the nation.

The Office of Safe and Healthy Schools (OSHS)

The Office of Safe and Healthy Schools (OSHS) was developed as the successor program to the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (OSDFS) program, which was first authorized by Congress in 1986 due to increasing rates of alcohol and other drug use in schools. The OSHS administers, coordinates, and recommends policy for improving school safety by:

- Providing financial assistance for drug and violence prevention activities and school preparedness activities that improve learning conditions
- Developing policy and legislative proposals related to violence and drug prevention within the Department of Education
- Participating in committees, partnerships, research, and data collection for drug and violence preventions and school preparedness

The Office of Safe and Healthy Schools houses the following centers:

Safe and Supportive Schools Group

The Safe and Supportive Schools Group administers Title IV, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, and other programs related to the development and maintenance of safe and drug-free schools. Specifically, this Group manages the Safe and Supportive Schools grant programs and provides national leadership on school safety issues. The Safe and Supportive Schools Group is responsible for the following programs:

- Safe and Supportive Schools (Discretionary Grants)
- Governors' Grants (Formula Grants)
- Grants to States to Improve Management of Drug and Violence Prevention Programs (Discretionary Grants)
- Safe and Drug-Free Schools Native Hawaiian Program (Discretionary Grants)
- State Formula Grants for State Educational Agencies (Formula Grants)
- The Challenge Newsletter Grant Competition (Discretionary Grant)
- Partnerships in Character Education Program (Discretionary Grants)
- Civic Education
    - Civic Education - Improve Public Knowledge of and Support for Democracy
    - We The People
    - Cooperative Civic Education and Economic Education Exchange Program (Discretionary Grants)

Healthy Students Group

The Healthy Students Group administers programs regarding violence prevention, alcohol abuse prevention, and the health and well-being of students and families as outlined in Title IV and V of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act. The group administers the Safe Schools/Health Students, Physical Education, Alcohol Abuse Prevention, Higher Education Alcohol Programs, Drug Testing, and School Counselors programs as well as other discretionary programs.

Center for School Preparedness

The Center for School Preparedness administers programs focused on preparing schools to respond to crisis and disasters. The Center is responsible for Project SERV (School Emergency Response to Violence), Readiness Emergency Management for Schools, Emergency Management for Higher Education, Homeland Security Activities, and Disaster Response Coordinated with FEMA and DHS. The Center for School Preparedness is also responsible for the following programs:

- Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (Discretionary Grants)
- School Emergency Response to Violence (Project SERV) (Discretionary Grants)
- Educational Facilities Clearinghouse
- Emergency Management for Higher Education
- Emergency Planning

The OSHS also implements other provisions as amended in NCLB. These provisions included the Gun-Free Schools Act, Transfer for Disciplinary Records, Pro-Children Act, and Unsafe School Choice Option.

GUN-FREE SCHOOLS ACT

In order to reestablish the perception of schools as safe havens for learning, nearly all states have developed some sort of crime-free, weapon-free, or safe-school zone statute. Over the past decade, every state has adopted a "zero tolerance" law on weapons at school in compliance with the 1994 federal gun-free schools law. The Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 required states to pass laws ordering school districts to expel for one year any student who brings a firearm to school. The law, however, does allow districts to modify the expulsions in individual cases.

UNSAFE SCHOOL CHOICE OPTION

NCLB also required all states to implement the Unsafe School Choice Option to ensure that all students that find themselves in dangerous or victimizing situations on public school grounds may be allowed to transfer to another local education agency, including a public charter school.

NORTH CAROLINA'S EFFORTS TO MAKE SCHOOLS SAFER

In North Carolina, two important school safety policies have been implemented in the state during the past few decades. These policies are the Safe Schools Act of 1993 and the School Violence Prevention Act of 2009.

SAFE SCHOOLS ACT OF 1993

In 1993, The North Carolina General Assembly passed the Safe Schools Act. The Act requires LEAs to report certain acts of crime and violence to the State Board of Education. The Act charges all school personnel to report all unsafe activities to their immediate supervisor and to assist in maintaining a safe, secure and orderly school environment. General Statute 115C-228(g) explains that it is the school principal's responsibility to report certain violent acts to law enforcement.

To evaluate school safety in North Carolina, the State Board of Education must publish an annual report on acts of violence in public schools. The State Board defined 16 criminal acts to be included in its annual report. Nine out of the 16 acts are considered dangerous and violent.

The nine dangerous and violent acts are homicide, assault resulting in serious bodily injury, assault involving the use of a weapon, rape, sexual offense, sexual assault, kidnapping, robbery with a dangerous weapon, and taking indecent liberties with a minor.

The other seven acts included in the State Board of Education's report on acts of violence in public schools include assault on school personnel, bomb threat, burning of a school building, possession of alcoholic beverage, possession of controlled substance in violation of law, possession of a firearm or powerful explosive, and possession of a weapon.

Schools may be labeled "Persistently Dangerous Schools" if a school reports at least two violent criminal offenses and at least five or more of such offenses were committed per thousand students in two consecutive years.

School Violence Prevention Act of 2009

Through a bipartisan effort to eliminate bullying and harassment in North Carolina's schools, the North Carolina General Assembly passed the School Violence and Prevention Act in 2009. The Act defines bullying and harassing behavior as any pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, that takes place on school property at place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, and that:

1. Places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or
2. Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits." For purposes of this section, "hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior" (General Statute 115C-407.15a)

Also, the School Violence Prevention Act:

- Requires all schools to adopt policies that clearly define and prohibit bullying and harassment, and to create a clear system of reporting and responding to incidents
- Enumerates specific categories to identify and protect those children statistically shown to be most vulnerable to bullying and harassment
- Protects all students, teachers and staff from violence in schools, and does not assign special rights, special protection or preferred status to any groups or types of students

2013 Legislation On School Safety In North Carolina

In 2013, North Carolina passed several pieces of legislation related to school safety. Below is a brief summary of each key piece of legislation.

1. **School Psychologists, School Counselors, and School Social Workers:**
    - Directs school counselors to develop a school counseling program with at least 80% of their time dedicated to direct services to students.

2. **Grants for School Resource Officers in Elementary and Middle Schools:**
    - Provides grants to local school administrative units, regional schools, and charter schools for hiring or training of resource officers.
    - For every $1 of local funds dedicated, the state will provide $2 to supplement funds for school resource officers.

3. **Panic Alarm Systems:**
    - Requires local boards of education to adopt emergency response plans relating to incidents of school violence.

- Requires every school to have a panic alarm system that connects with the nearest local law enforcement agency by July 1, 2015.
- For every $1 of local funds dedicated for panic alarm systems in local school administrative units, regional schools, and charter schools, the state will provide $1 of matching funds.

4. **School Safety Exercises**:
    - Encourages all local school administrative units to hold a system-wide school safety and school lockdown exercise every two years.
    - In addition, schools are encouraged to hold an independent school-wide lockdown exercise at least once a year.

5. **Schematic Diagrams of School Facilities:**
    - Requires each LEA to provide a schematic diagram of school facilities to local law enforcement agencies.
    - If an LEA does not have a schematic diagram, it is required to develop diagrams prior to the 2014-2015 school year to share with local law enforcement agencies.

6. **Anonymous Tip Line:**
    - Encourages local school administrative units to operate an anonymous tip line to relay information on risks to school facilities and school-related activities

7. **School Safety Component of School Improvement Plans:**
    - Restructures the statute governing school improvement plans to implement the following changes:
        i. Deliberations on school safety components must be held in closed session.
        ii. All other aspects of the school improvement plan besides safety provisions must be public record and published on school's website.
        iii. Requires the superintendent to review and make recommendations on the safety components of the plan to the local board of education.
8. **Crisis Kits:**
    - Provides that NC DPI, in conjunction with the NC Department of Public Safety, may develop and adopt policies on the content and placement of crisis kits in schools.
    - Kits should contain first-aid supplies, communications devices, and other items recommended by the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

9. **School Safety for Charter Schools and Regional Schools:**
    - Encourages charter schools and regional schools to adopt emergency response plans in coordination with local law enforcement agencies.
    - Charter schools and regional schools are encouraged to provide schematic diagrams to local law enforcement agencies and hold school-wide safety and lockdown exercises annually.

10. **Emergency and Crisis Training:**
    - Encourages the Departments of Public Safety, Justice, and Public Instruction to develop school emergency and crisis training modules for school employees.

11. **Volunteer School Safety Resource Officer Program:**
    - Allows non-salaried special deputies to serve as volunteer school safety resource officers (volunteer SROs) with the power of arrest in public schools.
    - Volunteer SROS must:
        i. Have at least 2 years of prior experience as a law enforcement officer.
        ii. Be trained on the social and cognitive development of students.
        iii. Work under the guidance of the sheriff or chief of police.
        iv. Gain certification by NC Sheriff's Education and Training Standards Commission.
        v. Pass a standard medical examination.

LITERACY

KEY ISSUES

The structure of standards and curriculum in many schools marks the transition from third to fourth grade as the shift from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." Research on school achievement often points to third grade reading ability as a highly reliable indicator for later school success. For many reasons, ensuring students are reading at grade level by the third grade has been a high priority for teachers and policymakers.

North Carolina recently introduced the Read to Achieve program as part of the Excellent Public Schools Act of 2012. The program focuses on preparing students to read at grade level by the end of third grade, and prevents them from moving to the next grade level until they can prove their reading competency. Due to some implementation issues, the General Assembly and State Board of Education provided alternatives for program implementation during the 2014 legislative short session.

THE CASE FOR EARLY INVESTMENT IN LITERACY

A major goal of public education in North Carolina is to ensure every student graduates career and college ready. A wealth of resources and attention is focused on the final years of high school to keep students on track for graduation and encourage them to choose their best career or college path. However, North Carolina has been learning for years that investment earlier in a student's education has incredible impact on later success and ultimate preparedness for their future.

Study after study has revealed that the greatest predictor of high school graduation is the ability of a student to read by the third grade. **An analysis by MetaMetrics of the Public School Forum's Roadmap of Need data found that in North Carolina, third grade reading performance was the most positively correlated with ACT scores, which are used by the state as a capstone evaluation of college and career readiness**.[1] In fourth grade, students who still struggle to read and comprehend begin to fall farther behind their peers the longer they lag in literacy skills.

Recent legislation in North Carolina has attempted to address early literacy and a number of programs and resources across the state are focused to ensure literacy skills for every child in North Carolina.

READ TO ACHIEVE

The Read to Achieve program is a part of the Excellent Public Schools Act which became state law in July of 2012 and applied to all schools at the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year. Under this law, third-grade students who are not reading at grade level by the end of third grade will receive special help, including summer reading camp and other interventions to make sure that they can read well enough to be able to do fourth-grade work. Details of Read to Achieve include:

- Elimination of Social Promotion
    - Retention after 3rd grade
    - Good cause exemptions approved by superintendents
        - Teacher sends justification and documentation of good cause for exemption to principal

[1] MetaMetrics, The NC CAP "Roadmap of Need" Supports the Importance of the Read to Achieve Act. Available at https://lexile.com/about-lexile/white-papers/.

        - Principal makes initial determination of exemption or retention, then sends determination in writing to Superintendent
- Facilitating Early Grade Reading Proficiency Process
    - K-3 formative, diagnostic assessments
    - Instructional support and services for difficulties in reading development
    - Formative, diagnostic data to identify root causes of reading development deficiency
    - Adopted by SBE in August 2012
- Developmental Screening and Kindergarten Entry Assessment Process
    - 5 essential domains
        - Language and literacy, cognition and general knowledge, approaches toward learning, physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development
    - Early language, literacy, math within 30 days
- Comprehensive Plan for Reading Achievement Process
    - Improve reading achievement
    - Effective reading instructional practices based on current empirical research
    - Stakeholder input
    - Standard Course of Study / Common Core
    - Teacher licensure and renewal standards
    - Teacher education
- Successful Reading Development for Retained Students Process
    - Summer reading camps
    - Teacher: positive student outcomes in reading
    - 3/4 Transition class
    - Accelerated class
    - Mid-year promotion
- Notification Requirements to Parents and Guardians Process
    - Timely Notification to Parents/Guardians
    - Notification in writing
        - Not eligible for good cause exemption
        - Interventions used
    - Monthly reports on reading progress
- Accountability Measure Process
    - LEA Accountability
        - Published numbers of proficient students, not proficient students, Read to Achieve test results, retained students, exemptions
    - Local Boards of Education
        - Reports sent to State Board including interventions used
        - SBE and DPI provide technical assistance

NC DPI has a wealth of resources available for parents and teachers to better understand the policies and implementation of Reach to Achieve at http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/k-3literacy/achieve/.

The original 2012 Read to Achieve law required 36 tests to assess whether third-graders are up to grade level in reading comprehension, but greater flexibility has been provided after the specific requirements of the law proved to be challenging to implement. Teachers, parents and school administrators complained that the law is overly strict and requires too much testing – three tests for each of 12 reading standards, all administered in the second half of the school year. In June 2014 the Governor signed a new law passed by the General Assembly to give school districts more flexibility in how and when they test students. Alternative assessments are allowed as long as they are approved by the State Board of Education and teachers are allowed to spread testing throughout the third-grade year.

READ TO ACHIEVE RESULTS

In 2014-15, 76 percent (89,906 students) of North Carolina public school third grade students met the reading proficiency standards under North Carolina's Read to Achieve program. This is down from 2013-14 when 79 percent of third grade students met the proficiency standards.

Third graders demonstrated reading proficiency through one of the following options:

- passing the Beginning-of-Grade 3 English Language Arts/Reading assessment;
- passing the End-of-Grade 3 English Language Arts/Reading assessment;
- passing the End-of-Grade 3 English Language Arts/Reading assessment retest;
- passing the Read to Achieve Alternative Test;
- passing an alternative assessment for reading; or
- successfully completing the reading portfolio.[2]

State Reading Camp Data

School Year	Students Eligible for Third-Grade Reading Camp	Students Attending Third-Grade Reading Camp	Number of Students Proficient After Attending Reading Camp
2014	18,373	12, 827 (69.8% of eligible students)	3,426 (26.7% of those attending camp)
2015	20,240	12, 586 (62.2% of eligible students)	4, 151 (33% of those attending camp)

Source: NC DPI, Improve K-3 Literacy Accountability Measures. Available at http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/k-3literacy/achieve/2015-final.pdf

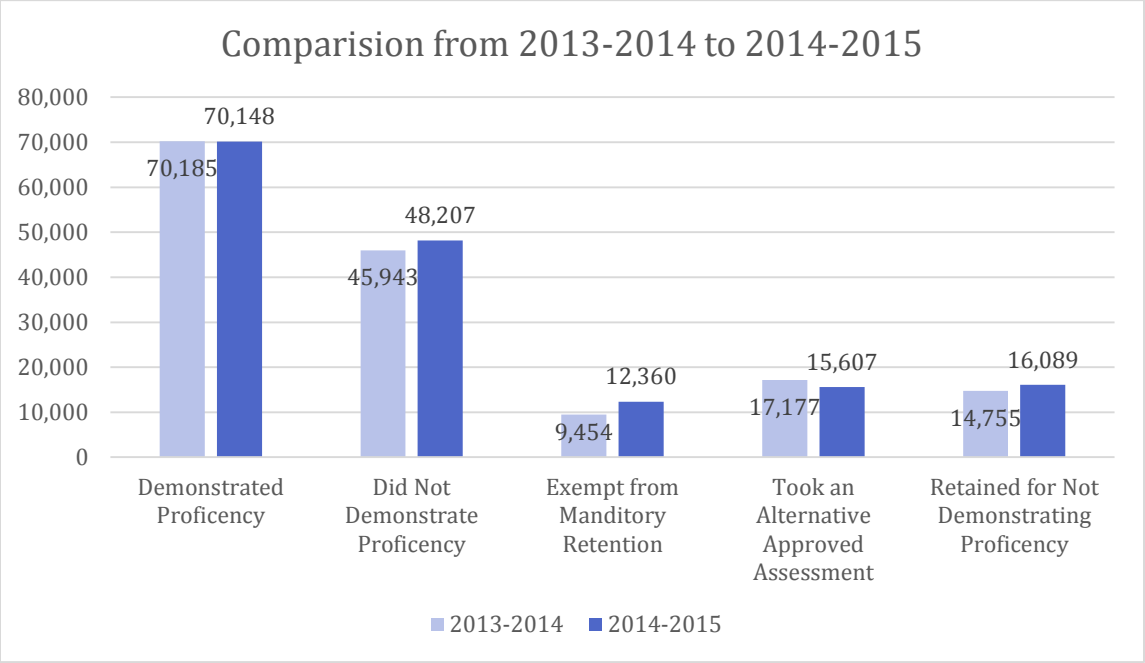
2014- 2015 Read to Achieve End-of- Year Results

The denominator for calculating the required percentages for Rows 1, 2, and 3, is all students in membership at grade 3 for the first day of spring testing		Number of Students	Percentage
1	Demonstrated reading proficiency on the Beginning-of-Grade 3 (BOG3) ELA/Reading Assessment, the End-of Grade (EOG) ELA/Reading Assessment , or the EOG ELA/Reading Retest (scored Level 3 or higher)	70, 148	59.3%
2	Did not demonstrate reading proficiency on the BOG3 ELA/Reading Assessment, the EOG Reading Assessment, or the EOG ELA/Reading Retest	48,207	40.7%
3	The number and percentage of students exempt from mandatory retention in third grade for a good cause. Students may be counted in this category only once.	12, 360	10.4%
The denominator for Row 4 is the number of students from Row 2 minus the number of students in Row 3			

[2] NC DPI, Seventy-Six Percent of Third Graders Meet Reading Proficiency Standards. Available at http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/newsroom/news/2015-16/20151001-01.

4	The number and percentage of students who took and passed an alternative assessment approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) (i.e., Read to Achieve Test or locally determined SBE-approved alternative assessment). Students may be counted in the numerator and/or the denominator only once for this category	15,607	43.5%
The denominator for Row 5 is all students in membership at grade 3 for the first day of spring testing			
5	Total number and percentage of students retained for not demonstrating reading proficiency on third-grade standards (For 2015-16, students who are not proficient will be either: (1) retained in third grade accelerated class, (2) placed in a ¾ transition class with a retained label, or (3) placed in a fourth-grade accelerated class with a retained reading label.	16, 089	13.6%

Source: NC DPI, Improve K-3 Literacy Accountability Measures.



Source: NC DPI, Improve K-3 Literacy Accountability Measures.

EARLY EDUCATION

KEY ISSUES

The most rapid period of development in human life occurs from birth to age eight. In fact, 90% of critical brain development happens in the first five years of life. What happens in these first eight years sets the foundation for all of the years that follow.

Less than half of pre-kindergarten aged children in North Carolina are enrolled in regulated early learning programs in North Carolina.

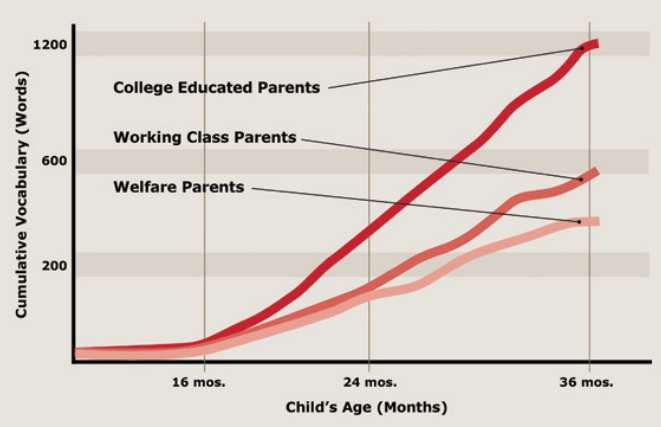
THE CASE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

A wealth of research has documented the importance of the early years of a child's life and development, and the potential for quality early education programs to promote strong trajectories for a child's life and success in further education, health, and later employment. The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University has compiled many of the most prominent studies on early education and some of the most poignant data on the value of investment in a child's early years.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY YEARS

The early years matter because, in the first few years of life, 700 new neural connections are formed every second, a higher rate than at any other time of life.[1] Neural connections are formed through the interaction of genes and a baby's environment and experiences. These are the connections that build brain architecture – the foundation upon which all later learning, behavior, and health depend. Early experiences and the environments in which children develop in their earliest years can have lasting impact on later success in school and life. In fact, by about age five, the brain has reached 90 percent of its adult volume, creating 85 percent of the intellect, personality, and skills that a child will carry though life.[2] Barriers to children's educational achievement linked to their environment and experiences start early, and continue to grow without intervention. Differences in the size of children's vocabulary first appear at 18 months of age, and vary based on family education and income. By age 3, children with college-educated parents or primary caregivers have vocabularies 2 to 3 times larger than those whose parents did not complete high school. Children who lack a language-rich environment early in life reach kindergarten already behind

18 MONTHS: AGE AT WHICH DISPARITIES IN VOCABULARY BEGIN TO APPEAR

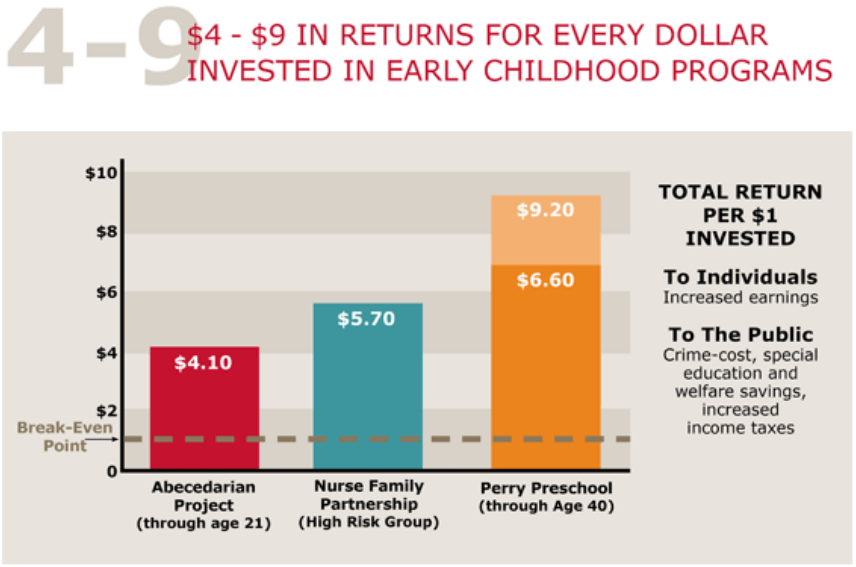


[1] Harvard University Center on the Developing Child. Available at http://developingchild.harvard.edu/.
[2] From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development, National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. Available at http://www.nap.edu/read/9824/chapter/1.

their peers, and some will never catch up.[3]

Return on Investment in Early Education

Fifty years of research prove that students in high-quality preschool programs score significantly higher in reading and math when they enter school. Those children are less likely to drop out, repeat grades or need special education, and they are more likely to attend college. A study of 111 North Carolina children in a high-quality full-day, year-round, birth-to-kindergarten program found that 67 percent of participating children graduated from high school by age 19, compared with 51 percent for the control group. What's more, 36 percent of children enrolled in the program attended a four-year college, versus 14 percent among those who did not enroll in the program.[4]



Providing young children with a healthy environment in which to learn and grow is not only good for their development—economists have also shown that high-quality early childhood programs bring impressive returns on investment to the public. Three of the most rigorous long-term studies found a range of returns between $4 and $9 for every dollar invested in early learning programs for low-income children. Program participants followed into adulthood benefited from increased earnings while the public saw returns in the form of reduced special education, welfare, and crime costs, and increased tax revenues from program participants later in life.[5]

CHILD CARE IN NORTH CAROLINA

Compared to the national average, North Carolina has one of the highest rates of working mothers with young children, making the need for child care one of the state's top priorities. Almost 250,000 children spend part or all of their day in regulated child care arrangements. The need and availability of child care is essential for the State of North Carolina's economic development and stability.

North Carolina Census Data 2014	
Total Population	9,943,964
Children under 5 years old	606,581
Total children under 18	2,287,112
Children under 5 as percent of population	6.1%
Children under 18 as percent of population	23%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts, 2014.
Available at https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/37,00.

[3] Harvard University Center on the Developing Child.
[4] Perry Preschool Study, Heckman & Masterov
[5] Harvard University Center on the Developing Child.

Child Care Highlights 2014	
Number of Regulated Child Care Centers	4,763
Number of Children Enrolled in Child Care Centers	234,911
Number of Regulated Family Child Care Homes	2,407
Number of Children Enrolled in Family Child Care Homes	14, 743
Number of Children Served by Subsidy	83,700
Total Number of Regulated Facilities	7,140
Total Number of Children Enrolled in Regulated Facilities	249,654

Source: NC Division of Child Development and Early Education, Monthly Statistical Summary Report - July 2014. Available at http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/general/mb_snapshot.asp.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS IN NORTH CAROLINA

A variety of programs and funding streams come together to make up North Carolina's early childhood education system. Federal funding supports North Carolina's Head Start program and a variety of other programs. State funding supports NC Pre-K and other specific programs targeted for children with disabilities. North Carolina's early childhood system includes the following programs and departments:

NORTH CAROLINA INFANT TODDLER PROGRAM

Children aged zero to three with certain levels of developmental delay or established special needs conditions, and their families, are eligible for the Infant Toddler Program (ITP). No family is denied services because of the inability to pay. Services are provided in children's homes or community settings such as parks, playgrounds, or child care facilities. The North Carolina Infant Toddler Program addresses requirements under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that states must provide early learning support for individuals with documented disabilities.

NC OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

The Department of Public Instruction's Office of Early Learning is a state office that supports children's success from Pre-K through third grade by administering state and federally funded programs, including:

FIRSTSCHOOL	FirstSchool is a Pre-K through Grade 3 initiative to promote public school efforts to become more responsive to the needs of an increasingly younger, more diverse population. FirstSchool unites the best of early childhood, elementary and special education.
PRESCHOOL EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN	Since 1991, all three- four- and pre-k five-year-old children with disabilities in North Carolina have been entitled to a free and appropriate public education mandated through the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In 2015-16, over 19,000 children are currently receiving services through the state's Preschool Exceptional Children program.[6] Coordinators through the program work directly with children and families to ensure proper program placement and to support the family in finding other necessary health and education services.

[6] NC DPI Exceptional Children Division. Available at http://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/reports-data/child-count/reports/december-1.

TITLE I PRESCHOOL	A Title I Preschool is a program of high-quality educational experiences designed to enable young children to meet challenging state standards. Although Title I legislation allows its preschool programs to serve children from birth up to age five, most North Carolina Title I Preschools serve four-year-olds only. These programs usually follow the school calendar and school day, and are staffed with both a licensed teacher and highly qualified teacher assistant. Curricula used in Title I preschools must be comprehensive, research-based, and aligned with North Carolina's early learning standards. The learning experiences offered in a Title I preschool promote growth in all developmental domains, including language, literacy, math, physical, emotional, and social development.
HEAD START	Head Start is a federally funded, comprehensive preschool program designed to meet the emotional, social, health, nutritional, and psychological needs of children aged 3 to 5 and their families. Head Start helps develop social competencies in children and promotes self-sufficiency through a comprehensive family-focused approach.
EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY	Even Start is a comprehensive family literacy program intended to help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy and improve the educational opportunity of low income families. North Carolina's Even Start Program focuses on the educational needs of the whole family. It supports the philosophy that the educational attainment of children and their parents are interrelated, and that improving the literacy skills of parents results in a positive effect on the educational experiences of their children.
GOVERNOR MOREHEAD PRESCHOOL	The Governor Morehead Preschool (GMP) provides community-based early intervention and preschool services to children ages birth through five years with diagnosed visual impairments. GMP places a strong emphasis on serving children in settings that are familiar and comfortable.
EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING	The Early Intervention Program for Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing provides services to children who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf/blind, ages birth to three and their families. Concentrating on language and communication skill development, itinerant professionals provide family-centered intervention in home and child care settings. At age three, the program works to establish a smooth transition to the local education agency.

DEVELOPMENTAL DAY CENTER PROGRAM

Developmental day funds are made available through the State Board of Education to assist in providing special education and related services to eligible children with disabilities who are placed in accredited development day centers by local education agencies. The program serves children with disabilities ages 3 through 21 in a developmental day center approved by the NC Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Child Development and Early Education.[7]

[7] NC DPI Exceptional Children Division.
Available at http://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/finance-grants/applications/developmental-day-center-program.

North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten Program (NC Pre-K, formerly More at Four)

North Carolina's More at Four program was initiated in 2001-02 as a state-funded initiative for at-risk four-year-olds that aimed to prepare them for success entering elementary school. During the 2011-2012 school year, administrative control of the program was relocated from the Department of Public Instruction to the Department of Health and Human Services, and the program was renamed the NC Pre-Kindergarten Program.

The NC Pre-K Program delivers a high-quality educational experience during the year prior to kindergarten entry, enrolling at-risk 4-year-olds from low-income families who have not participated in other early childhood programs. At-risk children are distinct based on a number of factors, which include having a developmental delay or identified disability, coming from a family with an income at or below 75% of the state median income, having a chronic health condition, or limited English proficiency. Similarly, children whose parents are active duty military personnel are automatically eligible for the program.

The NC Pre-K Program is required to meet the same high-quality program standards that were in place for the More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program. NC Pre-K operates on a school day and school calendar basis for 6.5 hours per day for 36 weeks per year.

Approximately $18.8 million in one-time funds that were available for NC Pre-K in FY 2011-2012 were not available in FY 2012-2013; however, in 2013-2014, $12.4 million in recurring funds were added to the program, making it possible to serve more children than originally anticipated for that year.

NC Pre-K classrooms are available statewide in private licensed Head Start programs, child care centers, and public schools. All programs must earn high-quality ratings under the state child care licensing system to qualify for participation in NC Pre-K and the state's child care subsidy system. Program standards set for NC Pre-K must be met in both public and nonpublic settings.[8]

NC Pre-K has served over 292,000 children since its inception. In 2013-2014, the program served approximately 30,000 students in 2,000 classrooms located at more than 1,000 sites.[9]

In 2010, an evaluation of the More at Four program found that economically-disadvantaged children who attended the program achieved statistically significant higher third grade math and reading scores than economically-disadvantaged children who did not attend More at Four programs.[10] In 2013-14, children enrolled in the NC Pre-K Program made significant gains from pre-k through kindergarten across all domains of learning. Children showed gains in language and literacy skills, math skills, general knowledge, and behavior skills.[11]

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[8] National Institute for Early Education Research, The State of Preschool 2015 (North Carolina, p 127-128). Available at http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/2015%20Yearbook.pdf.

[9] FPG Child Development Institute at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Executive Summary, Children's Kindergarten Outcomes and Program Quality in the North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten Program 2013-14. Available at http://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/reports-and-policy-briefs/NC%20Pre-K%20Eval%202013-2014%20Exec%20Sum.pdf.

[10] Peisner-Feinberg, E. & Schaff, J., 2010.

[11] FPG Child Development Institute at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Executive Summary, Children's Kindergarten Outcomes and Program Quality in the North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten Program 2013-14.

SMART START

Smart Start is North Carolina's nationally-recognized public/private partnership to help every child reach his or her potential and be prepared to succeed in a global community. Smart Start aspires to help working parents pay for child care, improve the quality of child care, and provide health and family support services in every North Carolina county. Smart Start was created in 1993 as an innovative solution to the problem of children entering school unprepared to learn. The initiative is funded by the NC General Assembly and several prominent foundations and operates through independent, private organizations working in all 100 North Carolina counties through The North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) and 75 local partnerships.

Smart Start's purpose is to increase the well-being of children birth to five by:

- Increasing the quality of early care and education across the state, promoting high quality early care that is child-focused, family-friendly and fair to providers
- Offering family-focused programs that improve parenting and promote involvement
- Improve outcomes for children by increasing young children's access to healthcare
- Providing programs that develop early literacy skills needed for success in school, work and life.

North Carolina's Smart Start Program has contributed to:

- More children attending high quality care (rated as 4 or 5 stars by the Division of Child Development and Early Education Child Care Licensing Program) — from 33 percent in 2001 to 73 percent in 2014.
- 2,447 child care facilities received child health consultation services funded by Smart Start in FY2015. This is an increase from 2,303 in the prior fiscal year.
- Improved early literacy rates – programs like Raising and Reader and Reach Out and Read have shown improvement in developing language and literacy skills.[12]

NORTH CAROLINA EARLY LEARNING NETWORK

The North Carolina Early Learning Network, administered by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, provides early learning communities with professional development and technical assistance to support preschool children with disabilities and their families.

Goals of the Early Learning Network:

- Provide support and training to the NC Preschool Exceptional Children Coordinators.
- Increase the knowledge, skills, and capacity of early learning communities across the state through evidence-based training and technical assistance.
- Develop and disseminate evidence and research-based materials.
- Contribute to the development of state level guidance documents, processes, and training materials.
- Scale-up multi-tiered systems of support to ensure early childhood learning through program wide implementation.
- Collaborate among and within agencies to maximize resources.[13]

[12] Smart Start, Why Smart Start Works. Available at http://www.smartstart.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Why-Smart-Start-Works-June-2015.pdf.
[13] North Carolina Early Learning Network. Available at http://nceln.fpg.unc.edu/.

RECENT INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE NORTH CAROLINA EARLY EDUCATION

NORTH CAROLINA EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL

In early 2014 Governor Pat McCrory reinstated the North Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council and announced the appointment of 23 council members, including two current state lawmakers. The body is tasked with creating a comprehensive system of family services, while overseeing North Carolina's federal Early Childhood System Building Grant. Previously, the Council oversaw implementation of North Carolina's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant. Members serve at the request of the Governor. Alongside the reestablishment of the Council, the Governor announced a new website, www.earlychildhood.nc.gov, to serve as a resource for parents and families to find programs and services, and to learn about early childhood development.

CHILD WELLBEING & NUTRITION

KEY ISSUES IN CHILD NUTRITION

In recent years, increased attention has been paid by school and district leaders and policymakers to improving student nutrition, and to making school food options healthier. While there is wide agreement about the importance of helping students be well-nourished, the issue still poses several challenges for schools and school systems.

- **Healthier foods cost more**, so eliminating foods with high sugar, salt, and fat contents reduces revenue for school food service groups.
- **School funds dedicated to nutrition leave less to be budgeted elsewhere**. This dilemma makes paying employee salaries and benefits, equipment fees, supplies, and operating costs more difficult for LEAs.
- **Low participation leads to higher prices.** Federal programs provide more funding to schools with higher participation rates, so schools with lower participation rates lose out on two fronts: students are not fully served, and schools pay higher prices for participating students. As a result, it is imperative that North Carolina work to improve its low levels of participation.

INTRODUCTION

When discussing school reform, policymakers and educators have often focused on accountability standards, curriculums, and teaching styles. However, in recent years, the health and wellness of students has appeared more in the discussion. Extensive research and practical knowledge prove that physical health, nutrition, family and community environment, and social and emotional health are essential ingredients that can greatly contribute to, or greatly hinder, a child's ability to learn. This section will focus on issues of child wellbeing and nutrition in North Carolina and address some current policies and programs that seek to support healthy, thriving children. While this section primarily discusses nutrition, overall indicators of child wellbeing as represented by the Forum's *Roadmap of Need* are discussed at the end of the section.

NUTRITION

North Carolina and the United States face a dual dilemma: rising youth obesity and rising youth poverty. Rising poverty rates increase the need for schools to provide adequate meals to their students. At the same time, increasing rates of childhood and adolescent obesity oblige school agencies to limit student access to unhealthy food in exchange for more nutritious options. Improving child nutrition in schools is a vital factor in boosting student performance at all grade levels. Studies have shown that nutritious meals not only supply students with fuel for the school day, but also enhance attentiveness and improve school attendance and classroom behavior. Consuming a nutritious breakfast is especially important because students who eat a filling breakfast exhibit general improvement in their school performance and enhanced cognitive abilities. Furthermore, researchers have found that students who eat breakfast pay attention longer, are tardy less often, have fewer absences, and visit the school nurse less frequently.

Despite the plethora of scientific research studies that speak to the great value of nutritious meals for improving students' academic performance, many students skip breakfast and/or consume high-fat and high-sugar

foods in the morning. Since children can receive up to 50 percent of their daily food intake in school, it is vital that schools make healthy food more accessible to students.

LEGISLATION REGARDING SCHOOL NUTRITION

North Carolina has passed several laws to ensure that students have access to nutritious foods at public schools and institutions. Recent legislation includes:

- North Carolina's Nutrition Standards for Elementary Schools
  - Oversees the distribution of food offered through the National School Lunch Program, the After School Snack Program, and a la carte items
  - Sets health requirements for school food offerings to control for fat and sugar calories, whole grain content, fruit and vegetable offerings, as well as milk varieties available
  - Prohibits the sale of a la carte items that do not meet minimum nutritional values and processed foods that are predominantly made from sweeteners, including soda, chewing gum, and candy
- Senate Bill 415 (2011)
  - Requires that school breakfasts must be provided "at no cost to children who qualify for reduced-price meals"
- General Statute 115C-264
  - Mandates that "all school food services shall be operated on a nonprofit basis, and any earnings therefrom over and above the cost of operation… shall be used to reduce the cost of food, to serve better food, or to provide free or reduced-price lunches to indigent children"
- General Statute 143-64
  - Allows local administrative units, community colleges, and other public institutions to set nutritional standards on the types of beverages sold at each respective institution

OBESITY

- ✓ According to the 2013 Youth Risk and Behavior Survey, 15.2% of North Carolina high school students are overweight, and an additional 12.5% are obese.[1]
- ✓ Since 1995, the rate of childhood obesity in North Carolina has been increasing steadily.

NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Recognizing the public school as a place where children both eat and learn, the federal government has created several laws, guidelines, and subsidy programs that help schools provide nutritious food and health education to students. Below is a brief overview of current federal school nutrition programs.

GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR ALL NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

All public and non-profit private schools as well as residential childcare institutions that serve children are eligible to participate in federal school nutrition programs. National school nutrition programs offer United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) subsidies to schools serving meals that meet the federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Children at participating schools and institutions are able to receive meals at full price, reduced-price, or for free depending on family income.

[1] CDC, Division of Adolescent and School Health, 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Table 106. Available at http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6304.pdf.

INCOME ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS FOR FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE MEALS (2015-2016)

Household Size	Annual Income	
	Free	**Reduced**
1	$15,301	$21,775
2	$20,709	$29,471
3	$26,117	$37,167
4	$31,525	$44,863
5	$36,933	$52,559
6	$42,341	$60,255
7	$47,748	$67,951
8	$53,157	$75,647
Each additional family member add:	$5,408	$7,696

NC DPI, Income Eligibility Standards for Free and Reduced-Price Meals. Available at http://childnutrition.ncpublicschools.gov/information-resources/eligibility/eligibility/income-eligibility-guidelines/201516iegrev.pdf.

The monetary subsidies that the USDA offers to participating schools and institutions increase as the price each student pays for a meal decreases. All school food authorities, which provide food to students in these qualifying schools and institutions, are allowed to set the prices for meals, but must operate as non-profit organizations.

At the federal level, school nutrition programs are administered by the Food and Nutrition Services at the USDA. At the state level, school nutrition programs are operated by State Education Agencies, which have agreements with school food authorities.

NORTH CAROLINA'S PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

North Carolina school nutrition programs are administered and monitored by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, specifically in the Child Nutrition Services (CNS) branch. All federal lunch and breakfast programs are available to students enrolled in public school. In 2013-14, 423,909 students participated in school breakfast programs, and 876,862 participated in national school lunch programs.[2] In the 2014-2015 school year, approximately 679,858 students qualified for free meals and 73,959 students qualified for reduced price meals.[3]

North Carolina public and private non-profit schools offer both reimbursable meals and a la carte items through USDA meal programs. However, a la carte items do not necessarily comply with federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans and therefore do not warrant USDA subsidies.

[2] Food Research and Action Center, North Carolina. Available at http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/nc.pdf.
[3] NC DPI, 2014-15 Free & Reduced Meals Application Data. Available at http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/fbs/resources/data/.

A LA CARTE DILEMMA

Although the USDA programs offer subsidies to schools that serve meals which satisfy federal dietary guidelines, many school food authorities also provide a la carte items which include beverages and foods that do not comply with federal dietary standards. Since the early 1990s, the sale of a la carte items has increased as students have developed a taste preference for high-fat and high-sugar foods. In response, school food authorities sell these products at increasingly higher rates to gain profits. Because of the student taste trend and greater profit from the a la carte items, there has been a recent shift from the USDA-subsidized meal to the a la carte meal. Due to this shift, state and local funds for food have been appropriated elsewhere. This reality creates a dilemma as school food authorities must find a way to best feed students while simultaneously earning sufficient profits to operate.

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM (NSLP)

The National School Lunch Program helps provide nutritionally balanced meals to students in elementary, middle and high schools. Under the NSLP, school food authorities must serve meals that meet the federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans and must offer these meals at a reduced price or at no additional charge to students who qualify. In return, the USDA grants the school or institution a monetary subsidy for every meal served. In 2014, the NSLP operated in over 99,000 public and nonprofit private schools (grades K-12) and residential child care institutions across the country. The NSLP provided low-cost or free lunches to over 30.3 million children daily. [4]

Reimbursement rates for the NSLP are set based on the percent of free and reduced price lunches served by a school during the second preceding school year, meaning the actual meals provided by a school food authority in 2012-13 determine the reimbursement rates for 2014-15. Based on this model, in 2014-15, the reimbursement rates for a school food authority that served 60% free and reduced price lunches during the second preceding school year were:[5]

Free Lunch	Reduced-Price Lunch	Paid Lunch
$2.93	$2.53	$0.28

THE AFTER SCHOOL SNACK PROGRAM (ASSP)

Funding for the National School Lunch Program also serves food to children who participate in afterschool academic or care programs. Under the After School Snack Program, eligible schools and institutions, where least 50 percent of the enrolled children are eligible for free or reduced meals, receive USDA cash subsidies for each snack they serve in afterschool programs that are education or enrichment based. To receive the subsidy, the nutritional content of the snacks must meet federal guidelines. Currently, 27,000 schools nationwide participate in this program.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Under the School Breakfast Program, schools and institutions that provide their students with breakfast meals that meet the federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans receive monetary subsidies from the USDA.

[4]USDA National School Lunch Program. Available at http://ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/child-nutrition-programs/national-school-lunch-program.aspx#.Uu-9GdLiiTM.
[5] USDA, National School Lunch Program Fact Sheet. Available at http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/NSLPFactSheet.pdf.

The reimbursement rates for the 2014-15 school year were:[6]

Free Breakfast	Reduced-Price Breakfasts	Paid Breakfasts
$1.58	$1.28	$0.28

All children can participate in the program and meals are offered at full price, reduced price, or no charge, depending on the student's family income. In 2013-2014, 88,657 schools and institutions participated in the School Breakfast Program, serving over 13 million children nationwide. While this program has expanded greatly, large numbers of eligible students still do not take advantage of the School Breakfast Program.

Special Milk Program

In the Special Milk program, the USDA provides monetary subsidies to all eligible schools and institutions that serve milk to children. The milk must meet state and local standards concerning fat content and flavoring options as well as comply with the fat and vitamin requirements set by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Schools and institutions must offer milk at full price, reduced-price, or no charge, depending on students' household family income. Schools and institutions that do not participate in the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program are still eligible to participate in the Special Milk Program. Schools or childcare facilities in the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program already receive subsidies for the milk they offer students with breakfast and lunch meals; therefore, they are not eligible to receive additional USDA subsidies for milk. However, schools who participate in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program may participate in the Special Milk Program to provide milk to students in pre-K or Kindergarten. In 2012, over 61 million half-pints of milk were served through the Special Milk Program.[7] However, participation in the Special Milk Program is decreasing as more schools join the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

The Summer Food Service Program provides meals and snacks to children in low-income areas throughout the summer when children cannot receive meals in school. The USDA offers subsidies for all meals and snacks served by eligible schools and institutions, given that the food offered meets federal health requirements. This program runs on a volunteer basis: schools and institutions such as public schools, non-profit private schools, public or private non-profit camps, municipal, county, tribal, and state governments can freely participate in the program. In most programs, children receive one or two reimbursable meals per day. Students in the program follow the same payment methods as they do during the year for free, reduced-price, or paid meals.

States may determine eligibility requirements. In North Carolina, students are eligible for the Summer Food Service Program under the following requirements:

- Under 18 years of age or disabled individuals over 18 years of age
- Enrolled in "required" academic summer schools where students must attend classes in order to advance to upper grade levels and/or graduate[8]

[6] USDA, School Breakfast Program Fact Sheet. Available at http://childnutrition.ncpublicschools.gov/programs/sbp/sbp-factsheet.pdf.
[7] USDA, Special Milk Program. Available at http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SMP_Quick_Facts_0.pdf.
[8] USDA, Summer Food Service Program. Available at http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program-sfsp.

SEAMLESS SUMMER OPTION PROGRAM

The Seamless Summer Option Program offers meals to students in low-income areas through the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. Schools and institutions that are part of the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program may apply for the Seamless Summer Option Program, which allows them to continue to use the same food service and regulations from school year throughout summer months and track out periods. To participate in the Seamless Summer Option Program, schools must be area-eligible, meaning that 50 percent or more of the students in that area must qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Under this program, school food authorities are able to serve free meals to all children and youth under 18 years of age in low-income areas.

There are several types of schools and institutions that may run the program including:

- **Open sites:** all children eat free in communities where at least 50% of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.
- **Restricted open sites:** sites that meet the open site criteria, explained above, but are later restricted for safety, control, or security reasons.
- **Closed enrolled sites:** may be in any community for an enrolled group of low-income children and meets the 50 percent criteria explained above. This excludes academic summer schools.
- **Migrant sites:** serving children of migrant families.
- **Camps:** residential or non-residential camps.[9]

STRIKEFORCE INITIATIVE FOR RURAL GROWTH

In 2013 North Carolina became a StrikeForce state as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity. This initiative was created to address the specific challenges associated with rural poverty. Nationally, StrikeForce has invested more than $23.5 billion to create jobs, build homes, feed kids, assist farmers and conserve natural resources across more than twenty states.[10] Specifically in North Carolina, the initiative has provided 5,047,144 summer meals for kids. Participating Counties in North Carolina include:

Alleghany County	Edgecombe County	Montgomery County	Sampson County
Anson County	Gates County	Nash County	Scotland County
Beaufort County	Graham County	Northampton County	Swain County
Bertie County	Granville County	Pamlico County	Tyrrell County
Bladen County	Greene County	Pasquotank County	Vance County
Caswell County	Halifax County	Perquimans County	Warren County
Cherokee County	Hertford County	Person County	Washington County
Chowan County	Hoke County	Pitt County	Watauga County
Clay County	Hyde County	Richmond County	Wayne County
Cleveland County	Jackson County	Robeson County	Wilkes County
Columbus County	Lenoir County	Rowan County	Wilson County
Duplin County	Martin County	Rutherford County	

Source: USDA, StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity North Carolina.

[9] USDA, Opportunity Schools. Available at http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/opportunity-schools.
[10] USDA, StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity North Carolina. Available at http://www.usda.gov/documents/nc-strikeforce-info-0115.pdf.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program provides fresh produce to select schools across the nation. The USDA finances this program and aims to combat childhood obesity by educating students about healthy food choices and offering healthy food to students. Eligibility of schools and institutions is need-based. Therefore, schools with a high proportion of students who receive reduced-price or free meals are selected for the program more frequently.

The program began as a pilot in 2002, and after experiencing success in exposing students to healthy food options, was expanded to all states and US territories in 2008. North Carolina has selected certain schools to participate in this program. In 2014-2015 year, 155 schools participated in the FFVP, and 71,176 children were served.[11] These funds provide fresh produce to students in the selected schools and allocate funds to help teachers incorporate nutrition education into lesson plans.

Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

In December 2010, President Obama signed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Included in this legislation were the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), the Summer Food Service Program, the Afterschool Meal Program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). This legislation provides $4.5 billion in new resources for those programs. The law increased, for the first time in 15 years, the School Lunch and School Breakfast per meal reimbursement by six cents. Schools must meet the new nutrition standards in order to receive the meal reimbursement increase.

North Carolina Initiatives to Promote Nutritious Food for Children

In response to North Carolina's dual dilemma of high childhood obesity and food insecurity, the state has taken action to increase participation in meal programs and make the food offered in schools more nutritious. There are several initiatives housed in the North Carolina Division of Public Health (NC DPH) with the NC Department of Health & Human Services that further promote healthy eating and lifestyles for children and their families. The NC DPH offers assistance and resources for classroom lesson plans, course studies, nutritional information handouts, and access to further resources that parents, school administrators, school food authorities, and teachers can use to promote health and provide food to all of North Carolina's students.

School Breakfast Initiatives

In regard to breakfast, North Carolina has tried various ways to make the food offered through the Innovative School Breakfast Program more accessible to students by using innovative distribution methods. Under this program, depending on home income levels, students may purchase breakfast at a full price, a reduced-price, or receive breakfast for free.

[11] NC DPI, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) Applications Received for SY 2014-2015. Available at http://childnutrition.ncpublicschools.gov/programs/ffvp/2schspercent.pdf.

The methods of breakfast service that are either in use or that North Carolina Division of Public Health promotes include:[12]

Breakfast in the Classroom	Breakfast is delivered to the classroom by Child Nutrition staff, school staff or students. Breakfast is incorporated into academic instruction time.
Grab n' Go	Handheld breakfast items are served. Items can be bagged or packaged for quick pick up. Students can eat breakfast in the cafeteria, classroom or another location on school campus.
Satellite Breakfast or Breakfast Kiosk	Breakfast is served in high traffic area away from cafeteria (i.e., school bus or carpool drop off, parking lot, entrance, or hallway).
Breakfast Break	Breakfast is served after first period or at a scheduled time later in the morning.
Second Chance Breakfast	Breaking is served after first period or at a scheduled time later in the morning for students who miss breakfast before school.
Breakfast on the Bus	Breakfast is served and eaten on the bus on the way to school.
Universal Breakfast	School districts with a higher percentage of students who are eligible for free and reduced price meals are able to balance expenses and reimbursements to offer breakfast at no charge to all students regardless of income.

In July of 2011, North Carolina ratified a bill allowing all students who qualify for reduced-price meals to receive breakfast for free. In doing so, North Carolina hoped to increase participation in the School Breakfast Program and to decrease food insecurity levels. The term food insecurity refers to the USDA's measure of lack of access, at times, to enough food for all household members and limited or uncertain availably of nutritionally adequate foods. Food insecure households are not necessarily food insecure all the time. Food insecurity may reflect a household's need to make trade-offs between necessities, such as housing or medical bills and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods.

No Kid Hungry Initiative

In addition to innovative distribution methods, North Carolina piloted a program entitled "No Kid Hungry" in September 2011. Administrators introduced the program in 28 schools to increase participation in School Breakfast Programs. Under "No Kid Hungry," free breakfast was widely offered and the number of children who could receive free meals during the summer was increased. Since only 13% of eligible students utilized free or reduced-price meal programs during the summer months, the "No Kid Hungry" campaign focused on expanding the number of students eligible for these meals.

"No Kid Hungry" campaigns have been launched in several other states. These campaigns have positively impacted childhood food insecurity by increasing student participation in school breakfast programs and decreasing overall food insecurity levels.

Action Against Obesity

In response to the rising obesity rate and popularity of unhealthy a la carte items, North Carolina schools have also taken action to make healthier foods available to students. Many school systems have increased their fruit, vegetable, and whole grain offerings, limited fried food options, and reduced the types of available

[12] NC DPI, Innovative School Breakfast Programs. Available at Childnutrition.ncpublicschools.gov/programs/sbp/innovative-school-breakfast-programs

foods with high fat and sugar content levels. Schools are also eliminating whole milk and emphasizing the USDA-subsidized meal.

In 2006, North Carolina created Nutrition Standards for Elementary Schools in efforts to make school meals and afterschool snacks healthier. These guidelines require all reimbursable meals to meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, restrict sugar and fat contents of a la carte foods, and improve fruit, vegetable, and whole grain offerings. All North Carolina elementary schools were required to implement these food standards by the end of the 2008 school year. Nearly all schools had achieved these new guidelines and maintained them until many schools lost integral funding.

ROADMAP OF NEED

The Public School Forum's North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs (NC CAP) created an in-depth needs assessment for our state's youth.[13] NC CAP's Roadmap of Need contains twenty indicators of wellness in counties across North Carolina, divided into four categories:

1. Health
2. Youth Behavior and Safety
3. Education
4. Economic Development

HEALTH

The indicators used to determine county and statewide health wellness included teen pregnancy rates, number of physicians, child fatality, child food insecurity, and child obesity. Below are the statewide statistics on each indicator:

- Teen Pregnancy Rate per 1,000 = 44.90
- Number of Physicians per 10,000 = 22.73
- Child Fatality Rate per 10,000 = 5.64
- Child Food Insecurity Rate = 26.10%
- Child Obesity Rate = 14.50%

YOUTH BEHAVIOR AND SAFETY

To assess overall youth behavior and safety, NC CAP chose to evaluate the juvenile delinquency rate, short term suspensions, juvenile detention admissions, children in Division of Social Services (DSS) custody, and child abuse and neglect. Below are the statewide statistics on each indicator:

- Juvenile Delinquency Rate per 1,000 = 22.52
- Short-Term Suspension Rate per 1,000 = 132.89
- Juvenile Detention Admissions Rate per 1,000 = 2.08
- Children in DSS Custody Rate per 1,000 = 6.32
- Child Abuse and Neglect Rate per 1,000 = 10.39

[13] Public School Forum of NC, 2016 Roadmap of Need. Available at https://www.ncforum.org/roadmap-of-need/.

EDUCATION

The indicators for education include cohort graduation rates, 3rd grade reading proficiency, Math I proficiency, ACT composite scores, and percentage of Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) met. Below are the statewide statistics on each indicator:

- Graduation Rate = 83.9%
- 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency = 60.20%
- Math I Proficiency = 60.00%
- ACT Composite Score = 18.50
- Percentage of AMO Targets Met = 55.20%

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The final category in the Roadmap is economic development. The indicators used to assess county and statewide economic development included median household income, child poverty, unemployment rate, adults with bachelor's degree, and single parent households. Below are the statewide statistics on each indicator:

- Median Household Income = $46,556
- Percentage of Children Living in Poverty = 24.10%
- Unemployment Rate = 6.10%
- Percentage of Adults with at least a Bachelor's Degree = 27.80%
- Percentage of Children Living in Single-Parent Households = 36.15%