



> INTRODUCTION

Under North Carolina’s school finance system, born more than eight decades ago, it is the state’s responsibility to pay for instructional expenses (including personnel) while county governments pay for capital expenses (buildings and maintenance).

During the Great Depression, through the 1933 School Machinery Act, the General Assembly attempted to “relieve” counties of the responsibility for operating and maintaining public schools. In 1975, the School Budget and Fiscal Control Act reinforced the primacy of state support, setting forth the state’s policy of using state revenue sources for instructional expenses for current operations while expecting county governments to meet public schools’ facilities requirements.

Over time, however, the lines drawn in the 1933 and 1975 laws have become blurred, and the local role in funding school operations has increased. In 2013-14, counties spent \$3 billion to fund

instructional expenses, accounting for 25 percent of the combined federal, state, and local total. Counties provided funding for 994 principals and assistant principals (19.0 percent of the total), 6,567 teachers (6.9 percent of the total), 2,196 teacher assistants (9.5 percent of the total), and 3,104 professional instructional support personnel (20.7 percent of the total).

For more than 25 years, the Public School Forum of North Carolina has isolated local spending from state and federal spending to examine the capacity and actual effort of counties to support public schools. The annual Local School Finance Study focuses not only on the amount that counties spend on schools, but also on each county’s investment in the context of that county’s taxable resources.

From the early years of the Study, two trends have become evident that have deepened over time. First, wealthier counties are able to spend more on schools

while simultaneously making less taxing effort. Because wealthier counties have more taxable resources, they can keep taxes low while still generating significant revenues. Conversely, counties with fewer taxable resources need to make greater taxing effort to support their schools. Second, there is a widening gap between counties with many taxable resources and those with few, and as a result, a widening gap in counties’ school spending patterns.

State policy decisions made during the last 25 years have blunted the impact of these trends, narrowing the educational investment gap by providing additional funds for the state’s smallest and lowest-wealth counties. However, even with these important, positive policy steps, investments in North Carolina schools still vary dramatically by zip code. As a result, young people born into one of the state’s economically thriving counties will have levels of investment in their education not shared elsewhere in the state.

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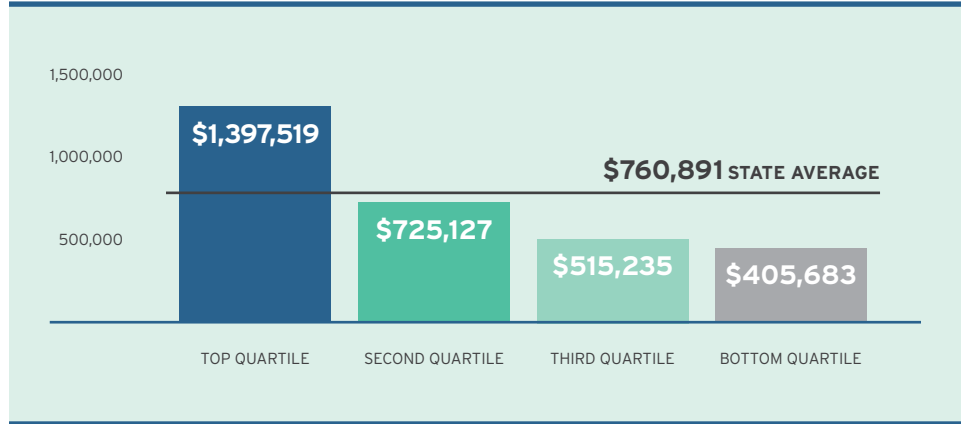
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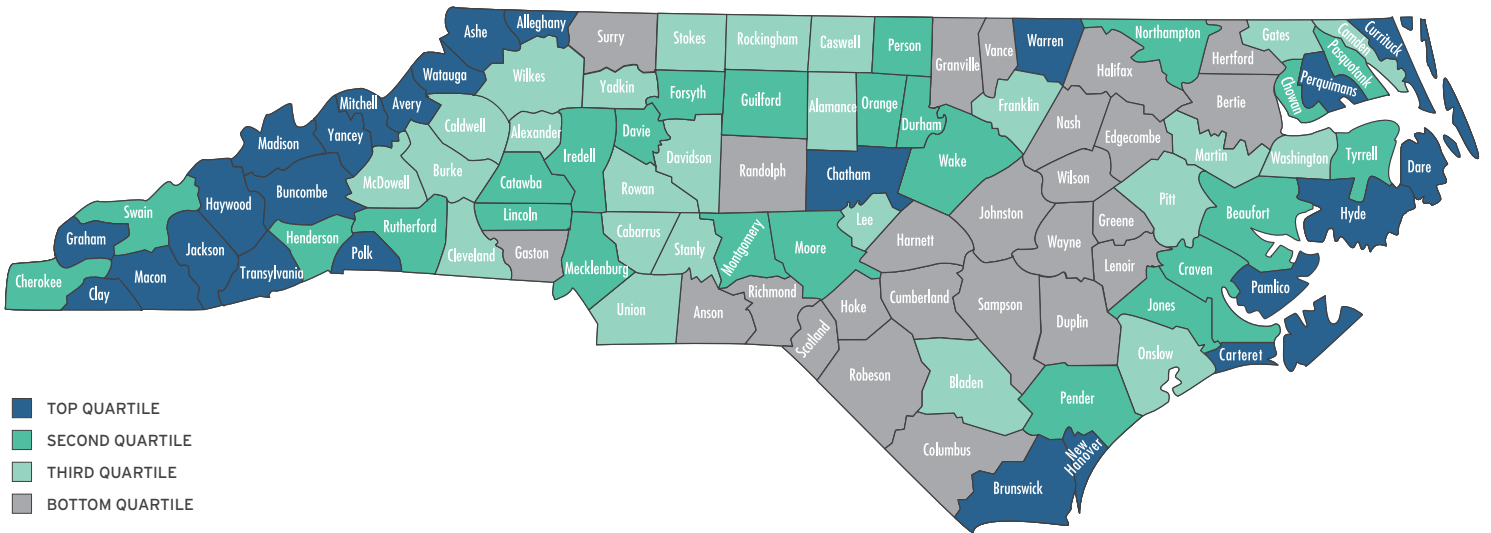
> INTRODUCTION (CONTINUED)

Disparities in resources available to counties can be illustrated by dividing the state into quartiles according to adjusted property wealth available per child. The top quartile includes high-growth Piedmont and mountain and beach resort areas, which had an average of \$1,397,519 real estate wealth available per child—\$636,628 above the state average. The bottom quartile has \$405,683 real estate wealth available per child—\$355,208 below the state average. The map illustrates where counties in each quartile are located throughout the state. In 2013-14, 34 counties were above the state average property wealth of \$760,890 available per child, while 68 counties were below the state average.

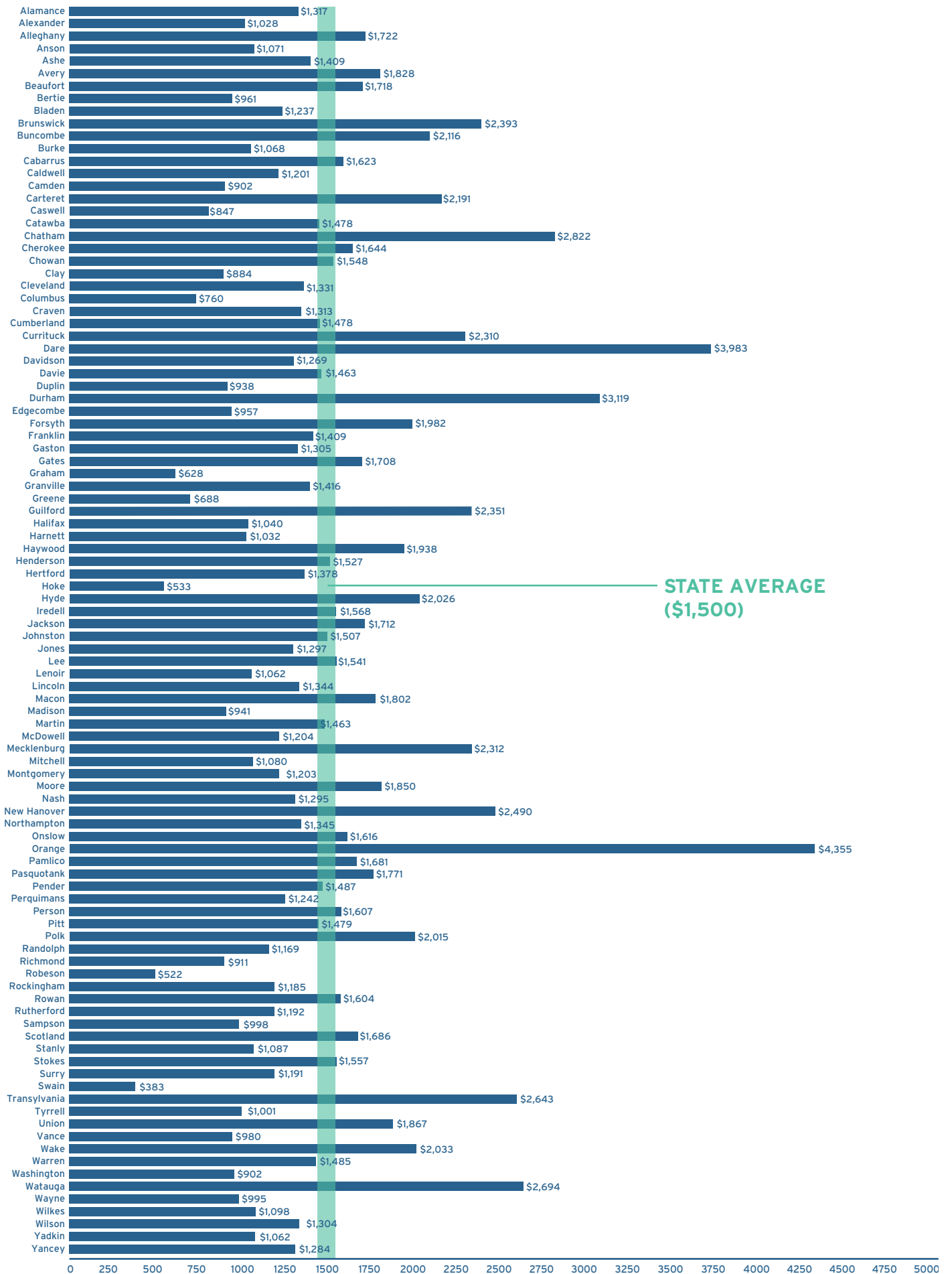
REAL ESTATE WEALTH AVAILABLE PER STUDENT



DISPARITIES IN REAL ESTATE WEALTH



2013-14 TOTAL LOCAL CURRENT SPENDING PER STUDENT



> WHAT'S NEW IN THE 2016 LOCAL SCHOOL FINANCE STUDY?

Long-time readers of the annual Local School Finance Study noticed a new look beginning with the 2014 study, which continues this year. "Under the hood," however, the study is largely the same as in earlier years, with a few notable exceptions.

Most significantly, since 2014, the study has included charter school enrollment in each county's total Average Daily Membership (ADM). Charter schools receive funding based on their ADM, just as district schools do. The change reflects that each county's funding for instructional expenses is divided approximately equally among all district and charter school students residing in the county.

For most counties, the new calculation resulted in little change to the study data. For some counties with large percentages of students attending charter schools, however, substantial shifts occurred. For instance, Person, Pamlico, and Northampton Counties, each with more than 10 percent of their public school students enrolled in charter schools, saw significant changes in their rankings in several of the finance study tables compared to 2013 and earlier studies. More detail about the change and its impact can be found in the report's "Notes on Methodology" section.

Also new since 2014, the state average per capita income used in Table 4 is the statewide average from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. Aside from this and the inclusion of charter school enrollments, the study's methodology is unchanged. The five main data tables included in past years' studies appear again in this year's study as appendices. The tables appear in the same order as in past years, to facilitate comparison with previous studies. The capital outlay and debt service averages, which appeared in Tables 2 and 5 prior to the 2014 study, and did not factor into the rankings, now appear as a separate Table 2A, with counties ranked to mirror the order in Table 2 to facilitate comparison with previous studies. Also since 2014, several redundant table columns have been omitted and others reordered to facilitate readability.

Finally, the 2014 Local School Finance Study pioneered a new summary table, which we include again this year: Local School Finance Study Rankings-at-a-Glance, which collects the rankings

from Tables 1-5 in a single table, ordered by the Table 5 Relative Effort rank. The table is accompanied by a brief explanation of the rankings, which also serves as an introduction to the more detailed tables included in the appendices.

The rankings in these five columns are calculated in the five tables included in the appendices to this report.

Property Value Rank: The first column shows county rankings based on the real estate wealth available in each county. Most local funding for schools comes from property taxes. Counties ranked higher on this measure have more property available for potential taxation to support education. (See Table 1)

Actual Effort Rank: Rankings in the second column reflect the actual dollar effort of counties to fund schools, without taking into account property wealth. Counties that spend the most per student rank highest on this measure. (See Table 2)

Actual Effort Rank II: The rankings in the third column serve the same purpose as the second column but take into account supplemental state funding provided for low-wealth and small counties. Counties that spend the most per student based on county spending combined with low-wealth and small county supplemental state funding rank highest on this measure. This column can be analyzed alongside the second column to show the impact of supplemental funding on counties' relative rankings. (See Table 3)

Ability to Pay Rank: The fourth column's rankings reflect an analysis of each county's fiscal capacity to support public schools, taking into account property values (from the first column, adjusted using the state's average effective property tax rate) and non-property tax revenues. Large, urban counties that combine high adjusted property valuations with broad-based economic activity and high per capita incomes tend to receive high rankings on this measure. (See Table 4)

Relative Effort Rank: The final column compares Actual Effort (from Table 2) and Ability to Pay (from Table 4). Low-wealth counties with comparatively high spending levels tend to rank highest in this measure. (See Table 5)



LOCAL SCHOOL FINANCE STUDY RANKINGS-AT-A-GLANCE

	FROM TABLE 1	FROM TABLE 2	FROM TABLE 3	FROM TABLE 4	FROM TABLE 5	
COUNTY	PROPERTY VALUE RANK: Adjusted Property Tax Base Per ADM	ACTUAL EFFORT RANK: Total Current Spending Per ADM	ACTUAL EFFORT RANK II: Total Current Spending Per ADM with Low Wealth and Small County Funding	ABILITY TO PAY RANK: Revenue Per ADM	RELATIVE EFFORT RANK: Current Spending as Percentage of Revenue per Student	
TOP QUARTILE	Dare	1	2	4	1	93
	Jackson	2	26	55	3	98
	Avery	3	21	14	7	95
	Watauga	4	5	11	4	84
	Brunswick	5	8	16	5	89
	Hyde	6	15	1	9	91
	Macon	7	22	50	8	94
	Carteret	8	12	27	2	96
	Transylvania	9	6	12	11	68
	Currituck	10	11	22	6	90
	Ashe	11	49	43	21	85
	Clay	12	93	35	27	97
	New Hanover	13	7	15	10	79
	Pamlico	14	29	8	16	86
	Polk	15	16	13	18	77
	Yancey	16	61	37	26	87
	Alleghany	17	24	10	22	74
	Graham	18	97	32	32	99
	Perquimans	19	63	25	23	92
	Buncombe	20	13	31	17	71
	Chatham	21	4	9	12	60
	Haywood	22	18	39	24	54
	Mitchell	23	74	42	39	81
	Warren	24	42	26	38	56
	Madison	25	88	66	42	88
SECOND QUARTILE	Moore	26	20	46	20	80
	Henderson	27	39	73	25	78
	Cherokee	28	30	59	43	31
	Tyrrell	29	82	2	45	82
	Northampton	30	52	20	48	51
	Durham	31	3	7	15	25
	Orange	32	1	3	13	4
	Mecklenburg	33	10	21	14	69
	Beaufort	34	25	49	31	50
	Swain	35	100	99	47	100
	Person	36	33	52	40	44
	Wake	37	14	33	19	76
	Jones	38	59	5	37	73
	Pender	39	41	56	50	36
	Iredell	40	35	67	28	72
	Montgomery	41	66	83	53	63
	Chowan	42	37	17	46	40
	Lincoln	43	53	91	41	65
	Catawba	44	45	80	36	61
	Davie	45	47	74	34	66
	Rutherford	46	68	76	65	46
	Guilford	47	9	19	30	13
	Craven	48	56	95	35	75
	Forsyth	49	17	36	33	29
	Pasquotank	50	23	34	49	15
THIRD QUARTILE	Rowan	51	34	48	58	11
	McDowell	52	65	63	73	26
	Wilkes	53	72	93	64	53
	Stokes	54	36	40	70	6
	Onslow	55	32	64	29	67
	Biaden	56	64	61	71	27
	Cabarrus	57	31	62	44	32
	Martin	58	46	23	57	21
	Camden	59	92	41	54	83
	Caswell	60	94	53	89	62
	Stanly	61	73	90	62	58
	Washington	62	91	29	83	57
	Lee	63	38	54	56	18
	Rockingham	64	70	71	66	41
	Yadkin	65	77	87	76	42
	Caldwell	66	67	57	78	19
	Davidson	67	62	84	63	37
	Alamance	68	55	75	51	49
	Union	69	19	38	55	8
	Alexander	70	81	97	81	43
	Pitt	71	43	58	52	33
	Gates	72	27	6	87	2
	Burke	73	76	94	74	45
	Cleveland	74	54	60	80	10
	BOTTOM QUARTILE	Franklin	75	50	51	86
Wilson		76	58	70	60	35
Hertford		77	51	18	82	9
Anson		78	75	30	90	24
Surry		79	69	77	61	48
Randolph		80	71	69	79	23
Halifax		81	79	88	84	38
Granville		82	48	44	77	7
Gaston		83	57	92	69	22
Edgecombe		84	87	81	88	47
Bertie		85	86	28	94	20
Lenoir		86	78	85	67	52
Cumberland		87	44	79	59	16
Duplin		88	89	78	75	59
Nash		89	60	65	68	28
Wayne		90	84	89	72	55
Columbus		91	95	96	91	64
Johnston		92	40	47	85	3
Richmond		93	90	82	92	34
Harnett		94	80	72	95	14
Hoke		95	98	100	98	70
Sampson		96	83	68	93	17
Scotland		97	28	24	97	1
Greene		98	96	45	99	39
Vance		99	85	86	96	12
Robeson	100	99	98	100	30	

> STATE AND LOCAL SCHOOL FUNDING IN NORTH CAROLINA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

North Carolina's first state constitution in 1776 included an education provision that stated, "A School or Schools shall be established by the Legislature for the convenient Instruction of Youth." The legislature provided no financial support for schools.

A century later, the constitution adopted after the Civil War required the state to provide funding for all children ages 6-21 to attend school tuition-free. In 1901, the General Assembly appropriated \$100,000 for public schools, marking the first time there was a direct appropriation of tax revenue for public schools. Today, the constitution mandates that the state provide a "general and uniform system of free public schools" and that the state legislature may assign counties "such responsibility for the financial support of the free public schools as it may deem appropriate." N.C. Const. art. IX, § 2 (see note, "Sources of Local School Finance Law: The North Carolina State Constitution").

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SOURCES OF LOCAL SCHOOL FINANCE LAW: THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE CONSTITUTION

Article IX, Sec. 2. Uniform system of schools.

(1) General and uniform system: term. The General Assembly shall provide by taxation and otherwise for a general and uniform system of free public schools, which shall be maintained at least nine months in every year, and wherein equal opportunities shall be provided for all students. **(2) Local responsibility.** The General Assembly may assign to units of local government such responsibility for the financial support of the free public schools as it may deem appropriate. The governing boards of units of local government with financial responsibility for public education may use local revenues to add to or supplement any public school or post-secondary school program.

Apart from the constitutional provisions, a major change in the school funding structure occurred during the Great Depression. Under the School Machinery Act (enacted in 1931 and amended in 1933), the state assumed responsibility for all current expenses necessary to maintain a minimum eight-month school term and an educational program of basic content and quality (instructional and program expenses). In exchange for the state's expanded role, local governments assumed responsibility for school construction and maintenance (capital expenses). The School Machinery Act established counties as the basic unit for operating public schools, which is maintained today with large county-wide school systems, except in the 11 counties that also have city school systems.

In 1975, the General Assembly enacted the School Budget and Fiscal Control Act, which delineated responsibility for school funding:

To ensure a quality education for every child in North Carolina, and to assure that the necessary resources are provided, it is the policy of the State of North Carolina to provide from State revenue sources the instructional expenses for current operations of the public school system as defined in the standard course of study. It is the policy of the State of North Carolina that the facilities requirements for a public education system will be met by county governments.

As noted in the introduction, over time the delineations proscribed by the School Machinery Acts and the School Budget and Fiscal Control Act have given way to increased local investment in instructional expenses. Even so, the North Carolina Supreme Court has made clear that it is the state that bears responsibility for fulfilling the constitutional obligation to guard and maintain the right of every North Carolina child to receive a "sound basic education." *Leandro v. North Carolina*, 346 N.C. 336 (1997).

The North Carolina Supreme Court has made clear that it is the state that bears responsibility for fulfilling the constitutional obligation to guard and maintain the right of every North Carolina child to receive a "sound basic education."

North Carolina has been engaged in litigation defending its system of school finance for almost twenty years. The legal action was instigated in part by spending inequities between low-wealth and higher-wealth counties. These inequities persist today. In 2013-14, the state's ten highest-spending counties spent an average of \$57,497 more per classroom than the ten lowest-spending counties. This large gap exists primarily because of the variation in property wealth across the state. The wealthiest counties have \$1,877,434 in real estate capacity available per student, compared with the poorest counties, which have approximately \$355,534 in real estate capacity available per student. This gap has widened by over \$1 million since the North Carolina Supreme Court's *Leandro* decision in 1997.



SOURCES OF LOCAL SCHOOL FINANCE LAW: THE *LEANDRO* CASE

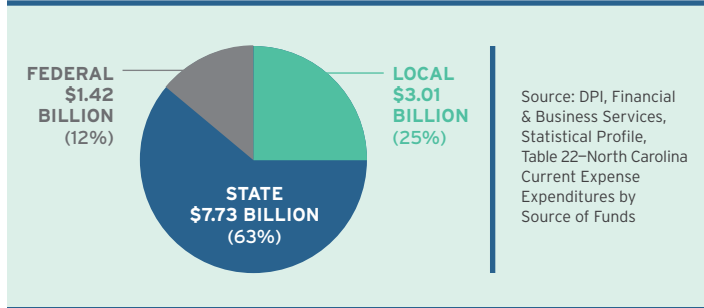
"Because the North Carolina Constitution expressly states that units of local governments with financial responsibility for public education may provide additional funding to supplement the educational programs provided by the state, there can be nothing unconstitutional about their doing so or in any inequality of opportunity occurring as a result... Clearly then, a county with greater financial resources will be able to supplement its programs to a greater degree than less wealthy counties, resulting in enhanced educational opportunity for its students."

Leandro v. State, 488 S.E.2d 249 (N.C. 1997).

> SCHOOL FUNDING: WHO PAYS FOR WHAT?

North Carolina public schools spent \$12.2 billion on instructional expenses in the 2013-14 school year, using a combination of state, federal, and local resources. State funding accounted for 63 percent of expenditures, federal funding accounted for 12 percent, and local funding accounted for 25 percent of spending.

SOURCES OF FUNDS FOR SCHOOLS IN NC, 2013-14



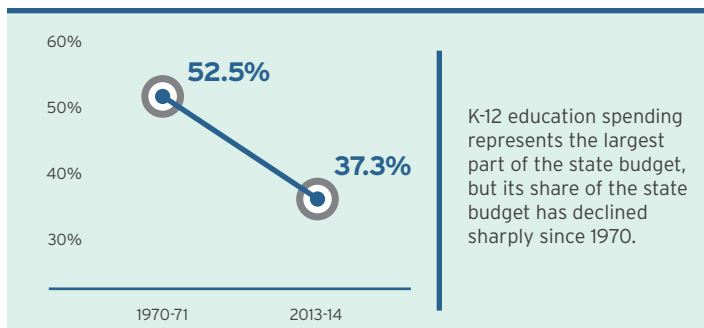
STATE FUNDS

In 2013-14, the state provided \$7.7 billion to operate 2,679 district, charter, and regional schools in 115 school systems across 100 counties for nearly 1.5 million students. Approximately 93 percent of state funds were spent on salaries and benefits for 137,455 state-funded school personnel.

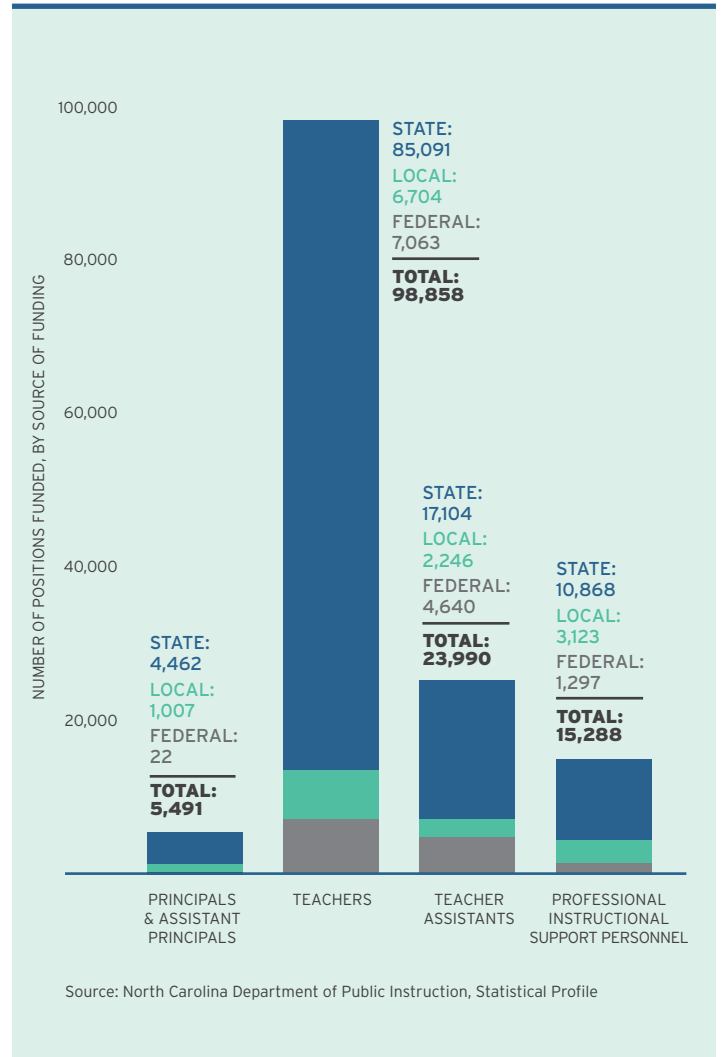
State funding for operations continually increased from \$3.44 billion in 1992-93 to \$7.7 billion in 2012-13, and held steady at that level in 2013-14. But while the level of funding has increased over time, the percentage of the state's General Fund dedicated to education has continually declined. In 2013-14, 37.3 percent of the state's General Fund was appropriated for K-12 public education, a significant drop from 1970, when it was 52.5 percent. If public education were funded at the same percentage of the General Fund as in 1970, districts and schools would have an additional \$3.05 billion to educate our students.

State funding for capital outlays has been relatively small compared with the state's investment in operations, and compared with what counties invest in facilities. In 2013-14, the state spent \$9.2 million on capital outlays, which was 2.1 percent of the combined local, state, and federal total. This was a significant drop from 2012-13, when the state spent \$32 million on capital outlays (5.8 percent of the combined local, state, and federal total).

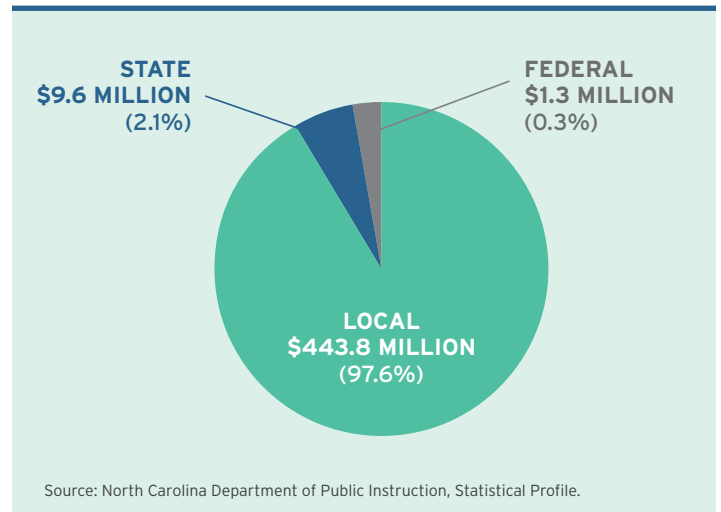
K-12 SPENDING (% OF GENERAL OPERATING BUDGET)



WHO PAYS FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL? 2013-14



FUNDING FOR SCHOOL BUILDINGS, 2013-14



LOCAL FUNDS

The nearly century-old division of state and local responsibility for school funding still shapes the way North Carolina pays for public education today, with 63 percent of instructional expenditures coming from the state and 97.6 percent of capital expenses paid at the local level. However, the division has eroded somewhat, with counties funding 18.3 percent of principal and assistant principal positions, 6.8 percent of teachers, 9.4 percent of teacher assistants, and 20.4 percent of professional instructional support personnel; and with the state paying 2.1 percent of capital expenses.

Considering local expenditures on programs and personnel in 2013-14, the ten counties that spent the most per student averaged \$2,916 per student compared to the ten that spent the least, which averaged \$705 per student. That represents a gap of \$2,211. Sixty counties are below the state average of \$1,500. Orange County alone spends about the same amount as the bottom six counties combined.

One of the primary challenges from the five low-wealth plaintiffs in the Leandro case dealt with the inequities between varying levels of county support for schools. However, the state Supreme Court ruled in 1997 that “the ‘equal opportunities’ clause of Article IX, Section 2(1) of the North Carolina Constitution does not require substantially equal funding or educational advantages in all school districts. Consequently, the provisions of the current state system for funding schools which require or allow counties to help finance their school systems and result in unequal funding among the school districts of the state do not violate constitutional principles.”



LOCAL SCHOOL FUNDING: IMPACTS ON SCHOOLS AND CLASSROOMS

Differences in counties' levels of investment in their school systems translate into dramatically different options at the school and classroom level. As an illustration, at a statewide average class size of 26 students per classroom, the ten counties that spend the most per student would spend, on average, \$75,824 per classroom. By contrast, the ten counties that spend the least per child would spend, on average, \$18,327 per classroom—a difference of \$57,497 per classroom. At the state's average elementary school size of 497 students, that translates to a difference of \$1,099,082 per elementary school. At the state's average high school size of 837, it translates to a difference of \$1,850,969 per high school.

FEDERAL FUNDS

Resources from the federal government accounted for 11.7 percent of North Carolina public education spending on instructional expenses in 2013-14, and totaled \$1,421,857,482. Federal resources are given to states in the form of direct grants, state applications, state plans, or a combination of the three.



RACE TO THE TOP'S ROLE IN THE 2016 FINANCE STUDY

Race to the Top (RttT) is a federal competitive grant awarded to North Carolina, focused on creating conditions for education innovation and reform, implementing ambitious plans in four education reform areas, and achieving significant improvement in student outcomes (U.S. Department of Education, Race to the Top Executive Summary, 2009). North Carolina was one of 12 states to receive an RttT grant in 2010. The grant includes \$400 million dollars to be used over four years on the state's public school system. Half of the grant is designated for use by local education agencies for their own initiatives that support the North Carolina RttT plan. North Carolina received RttT funding during the school year analyzed in the 2016 Local School Finance Study (2013-14).

> LOCAL SCHOOL FINANCE STUDY 2016: GAPS AND TRENDS

The primary source of revenue for county government is local property taxes, and this year the study once again revealed wide variation between the property values of the state's wealthiest and poorest counties, and resulting disparities in revenues generated. This year also saw the continuation of marked differences in spending per child between North Carolina's highest- and lowest-spending counties.

POOREST COUNTIES TAXED THEMSELVES AT HIGHER RATES, BUT STILL GENERATED SUBSTANTIALLY LESS FROM PROPERTY TAX

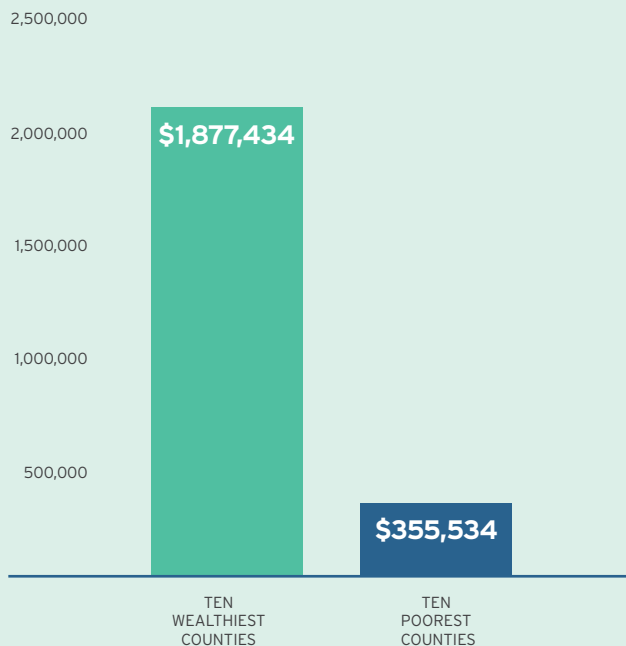
Coastal and mountain counties have the highest real estate wealth capacity in the state. In 2013-14, every county in the top ten had a per student real estate wealth capacity above \$1.56 million, and together had an average five times greater than the bottom ten counties. The ten wealthiest counties had an average real estate capacity of \$1,877,434 per student, compared with the ten poorest counties, which had, on average, a real estate

capacity of \$355,534 per student. This gap of \$1.52 million is smaller than last year's (\$1.69 million gap in 2012-13), a trend that has continued for the last three years of the Local School Finance Study. Major factors narrowing the gap include reductions in real estate wealth in the wealthiest counties, some counties' 2011 revaluations, and increases in student enrollment in several counties.

The ten poorest counties taxed themselves at nearly double the rate of the ten wealthiest counties—\$0.83 compared to \$0.43, a 40-cent difference. In spite of this, because of the disparity in real estate wealth capacity, the revenue the poorest counties could generate, even at the higher tax rate, was substantially lower than what the wealthier counties could generate at lower rates. The poorest counties continue raising their tax rates, while the wealthiest counties lower theirs, and yet the substantial revenue disparity persists.

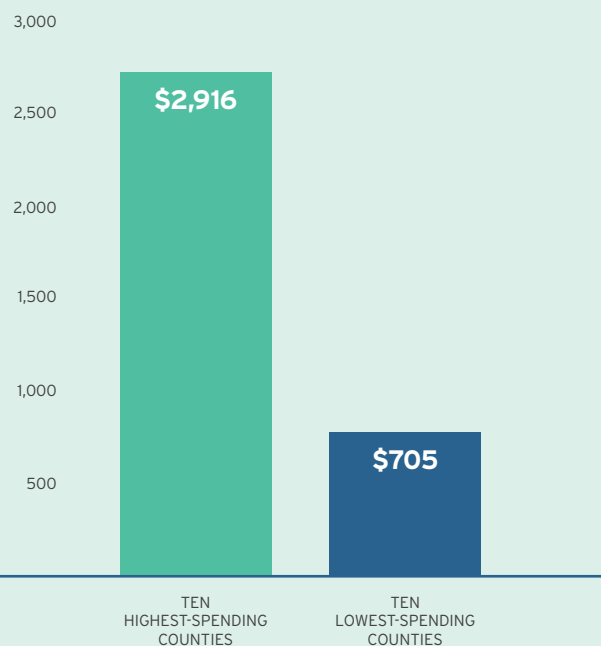
LOW- VS. HIGH-WEALTH COUNTIES

TAXABLE REAL ESTATE WEALTH PER CHILD



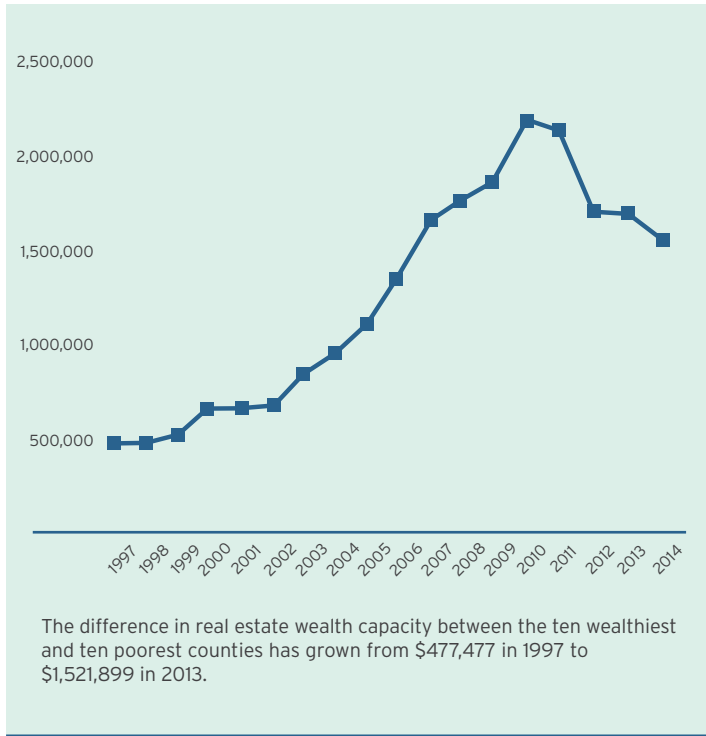
The wealthiest counties have more than five times the taxable property wealth per child available to the ten poorest counties. As a result, even though the ten poorest counties tax themselves at double the rate of the wealthiest counties, the revenue they generate through taxation is substantially lower.

SPENDING PER STUDENT



Annual per-student county spending on programs and personnel was \$2,211 higher in the ten highest-spending counties than in the ten lowest-spending counties. This gap is wider than last year, when it was \$2,183 per student.

REAL ESTATE WEALTH GAP



LARGE SPENDING DISPARITIES REMAIN

This year's study found a larger gap between the highest- and lowest-spending counties: \$2,211 per student, compared with \$2,183 last year. Orange County, at the top of the list, spends more than eleven times more per student than Swain County at the bottom. The ten highest-spending counties spend 4.14 times more per child (\$2,916 per child) than the ten lowest-spending counties (\$705 per child). On average, the highest-spending counties increased their spending by about 2 percent more per child this year since last year (\$61 more per student). The lowest-spending counties increased their average spending per student by 4.9 percent (\$33 per student).

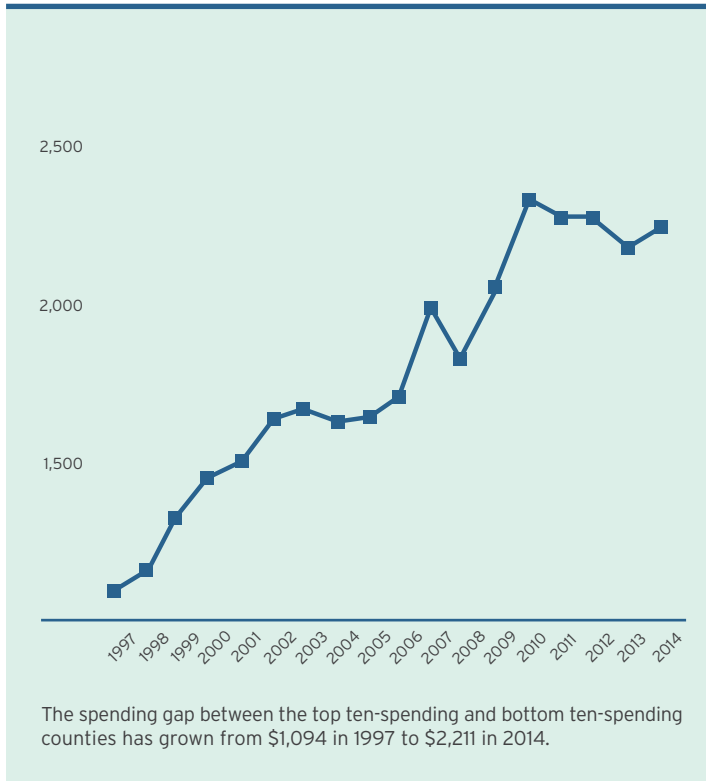
SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING REMAINS CRUCIAL

In 1991, the state enacted supplemental funds for low-wealth and small counties, in part to address the limited capacity that some counties have to raise revenues through taxation because of their limited local resources and size. In 2013-14 the General Assembly provided an appropriation of \$212 million for 69 low-wealth counties (79 districts) and \$45 million for 27 small counties.

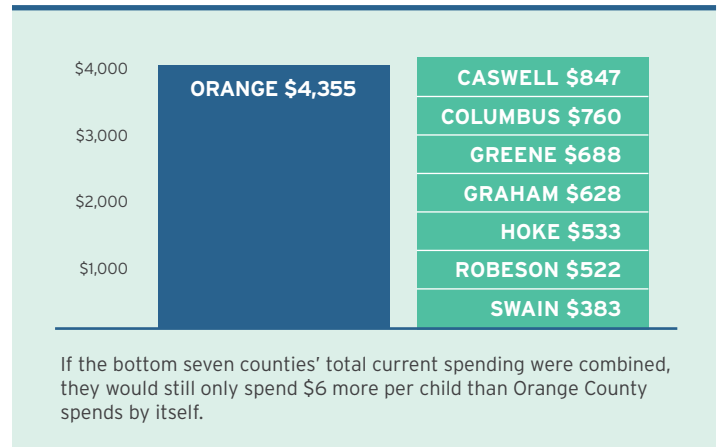
Low-wealth supplemental funding is provided to systems whose ability to generate local revenue per student is below the state average. Some of the factors used to determine eligibility are county adjusted property tax base, square miles in the county, and per capita income. In 2013-14, low-wealth eligible counties received total low-wealth supplemental funding ranging from \$24,299 to \$17.6 million. Per-student dollars ranged from \$8 (Cabarrus) to \$742 (Robeson).

Small county supplemental funding was provided in 2013-14 to those county school systems with average daily membership (ADM) less than 3,239 or to county school systems with ADM between 3,239 and 4,080 whose county adjusted property tax base per student was below the state adjusted property tax base per student. In 2013-14, eligible counties received between \$1.42 and \$1.89 million in small-county supplemental funding. Per-student dollars ranged from \$451 (Anson) to \$3,165 (Tyrrell).

WIDENING SPENDING GAP



SPENDING DISPARITIES



> NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

The Department of Public Instruction's Division of School Business' Report on Average Daily Membership and Membership Last Day by LEA (ADM & MLD) provides estimates of charter school enrollment in each county. Adding charter school enrollments to the ADM of the county in which each charter school is located produces a base calculation of total ADM for each county. However, charter schools may enroll students from across county lines, with local funding flowing from each student's district of residence to the charter school he or she attends (this is different from state ADM funding for charter schools). These cross-district enrollments are not captured by the ADM & MLD report.

Therefore, the 2016 Local School Finance Study relies on results of a survey of districts conducted by the Division of School Business in 2014 to account for all students within each district who attend charter schools. Survey data are provided at the Office of Charter Schools website for information only and are not used for any financial or budget purposes.

CAPITAL SPENDING

Data from the North Carolina Department of State Treasurer's Report on County Spending on Public School Capital Outlays was used to calculate a six-year average of county appropriations for capital outlay, interest on debt for school construction, and the net change in capital reserves. Withdrawals from the Public School Building Capital Fund, Grants from the Public School Building Bond Fund, and the North Carolina Education Lottery Funds have been removed from the county total. The debt service includes expenditures for school bond repayment and lease purchase agreements. The capital outlay is actual spending on capital projects or equipment for buildings.

SALES/ASSESSMENT RATIO

In North Carolina, most residential and commercial property is revalued once every eight years. Prior to 1984, it was difficult to compare tax wealth and effort because of this impediment to estimating the market value of property valuations. In 1984, the Department of Revenue completed its first statewide Sales/Assessment Ratio Study, comparing the market value of recently sold property with its assessed value. Using the ratio of assessed property value to market value, the Department calculated an adjusted property tax rate for each county. The longer it has been since a county has undergone reevaluation, the more likely it is that the market value of property in the county exceeds its assessed valuation.

Rapidly growing communities have numerous demands on public services, and the demands tend to outstrip land value increases. Therefore, to meet the increase in demands for additional services, local officials must either revalue property more often or raise taxes. In an effort to make this study as accurate as possible, a three-year weighted average is used to calculate the adjusted property valuation. This approach is intended to result in more accurate valuations for small, rural counties where relatively few land transactions might have taken place during any given year.

OTHER REVENUE SOURCES

The primary source of local revenue is property taxes. In addition to property taxes, this study includes a county's share of local option sales taxes and fines and forfeitures. Allotments from the ADM fund and grants for school construction have been removed to isolate capital spending. Finally, 11 counties have supplemental school taxes, with additional revenue totaling \$62.9 million in 2013-14.



TABLE 1: RANKING OF ADJUSTED PROPERTY VALUATIONS PER STUDENT

This table reflects the real estate wealth available to counties to support education. The ranking is based on the total adjusted property valuation for each county, divided by the number of students attending public school in the county. The property valuation was adjusted using a three-year weighted average of the Sales/Assessment Ratios.

COUNTIES	RANK	PREVIOUS YEAR'S RANK	LAST YEAR REVALUED	EFFECTIVE COUNTY TAX RATE	2012-13 ADJUSTED PROPERTY TAX BASE	2012-13 FINAL ADM	ADJUSTED PROPERTY TAX BASE PER ADM
Dare	1	1	2013	\$0.40	\$13,508,705,219.00	4,970	\$2,718,049.34
Jackson	2	2	2008	\$0.38	\$8,660,677,400.00	3,925	\$2,206,542.01
Avery	3	4	2010	\$0.41	\$4,488,947,875.00	2,174	\$2,064,833.43
Watauga	4	5	2006	\$0.32	\$8,910,703,347.00	4,478	\$1,989,884.62
Brunswick	5	6	2011	\$0.47	\$23,374,581,987.00	13,185	\$1,772,816.23
Hyde	6	7	2009	\$0.72	\$1,032,166,418.00	592	\$1,743,524.35
Macon	7	8	2007	\$0.35	\$7,558,664,110.00	4,352	\$1,736,825.39
Carteret	8	9	2011	\$0.32	\$14,153,242,356.00	8,604	\$1,644,960.76
Transylvania	9	10	2009	\$0.45	\$5,905,904,836.00	3,725	\$1,585,477.81
Currituck	10	3	2013	\$0.46	\$6,069,697,414.00	3,884	\$1,562,743.93
Ashe	11	11	2011	\$0.43	\$3,861,129,810.00	3,157	\$1,223,037.63
Clay	12	12	2010	\$0.48	\$1,607,935,584.00	1,332	\$1,207,158.85
New Hanover	13	14	2012	\$0.53	\$30,376,594,402.00	25,998	\$1,168,420.43
Pamlico	14	21	2012	\$0.55	\$1,778,740,793.00	1,524	\$1,167,152.75
Polk	15	13	2009	\$0.52	\$2,755,851,260.00	2,375	\$1,160,358.43
Yancey	16	16	2008	\$0.49	\$2,652,057,382.00	2,311	\$1,147,580.00
Alleghany	17	15	2007	\$0.54	\$1,606,325,907.00	1,434	\$1,120,171.48
Graham	18	17	2010	\$0.46	\$1,249,331,781.00	1,190	\$1,049,858.64
Perquimans	19	28	2008	\$0.56	\$1,746,316,461.00	1,771	\$986,062.37
Buncombe	20	18	2013	\$0.54	\$29,820,223,860.00	30,493	\$977,936.70
Chatham	21	19	2009	\$0.65	\$8,852,346,386.00	9,054	\$977,727.68
Haywood	22	22	2011	\$0.56	\$7,088,381,783.00	7,426	\$954,535.66
Mitchell	23	25	2009	\$0.42	\$1,870,217,464.00	1,965	\$951,764.61
Warren	24	20	2009	\$0.74	\$2,317,246,355.00	2,543	\$911,225.46
Madison	25	26	2012	\$0.46	\$2,289,657,781.00	2,518	\$909,316.04
Moore	26	23	2007	\$0.48	\$11,844,605,732.00	13,198	\$897,454.59
Henderson	27	24	2011	\$0.52	\$12,186,741,200.00	13,716	\$888,505.48
Cherokee	28	27	2012	\$0.54	\$2,926,788,835.00	3,486	\$839,583.72
Tyrrell	29	29	2009	\$0.78	\$449,190,749.00	537	\$836,481.84
Northampton	30	35	2011	\$0.98	\$1,946,648,025.00	2,351	\$828,008.52
Durham	31	30	2008	\$0.80	\$30,027,873,661.00	37,860	\$793,129.26
Orange	32	32	2009	\$0.88	\$15,859,315,581.00	20,205	\$784,920.35
Mecklenburg	33	31	2011	\$0.79	\$119,287,967,842.00	153,193	\$778,677.67
Beaufort	34	33	2010	\$0.58	\$5,533,780,555.00	7,244	\$763,912.28
Swain	35	37	2013	\$0.36	\$1,550,907,992.00	2,058	\$753,599.61
Person	36	39	2013	\$0.71	\$4,236,216,641.00	5,625	\$753,105.18
Wake	37	36	2008	\$0.57	\$117,432,195,440.00	159,357	\$736,912.69
Jones	38	42	2006	\$0.74	\$801,816,571.00	1,099	\$729,587.42
Pender	39	34	2011	\$0.53	\$6,232,289,281.00	8,704	\$716,025.88
Iredell	40	38	2011	\$0.50	\$20,291,936,406.00	28,555	\$710,626.38
Montgomery	41	40	2012	\$0.60	\$2,822,492,694.00	4,157	\$678,973.46
Chowan	42	48	2006	\$0.71	\$1,475,718,495.00	2,211	\$667,443.91
Lincoln	43	44	2011	\$0.62	\$8,214,512,128.00	12,313	\$667,141.41
Catawba	44	45	2011	\$0.54	\$16,031,880,376.00	24,121	\$664,644.10
Davie	45	41	2013	\$0.68	\$4,036,818,240.00	6,380	\$632,730.31
Rutherford	46	50	2012	\$0.62	\$5,916,509,015.00	9,438	\$626,881.65
Guilford	47	46	2012	\$0.76	\$46,675,847,548.00	75,340	\$619,536.07
Craven	48	47	2010	\$0.52	\$8,922,183,481.00	14,433	\$618,179.41
Forsyth	49	43	2013	\$0.71	\$32,013,247,973.00	55,608	\$575,695.01
Pasquotank	50	56	2006	\$0.68	\$3,199,099,080.00	5,648	\$566,412.73
Rowan	51	49	2011	\$0.66	\$11,219,269,985.00	19,813	\$566,258.01
McDowell	52	52	2011	\$0.53	\$3,526,448,741.00	6,359	\$554,560.27
Wilkes	53	51	2013	\$0.64	\$5,478,182,157.00	9,900	\$553,351.73
Stokes	54	53	2013	\$0.61	\$3,611,508,297.00	6,558	\$550,702.70
Onslow	55	57	2010	\$0.59	\$13,779,514,547.00	25,084	\$549,334.82
Bladen	56	60	2007	\$0.72	\$2,685,287,249.00	5,002	\$536,842.71
Cabarrus	57	54	2012	\$0.69	\$19,443,610,879.00	36,285	\$535,858.09
Martin	58	81	2009	\$0.76	\$1,965,809,368.00	3,677	\$534,623.16
Camden	59	55	2007	\$0.73	\$1,004,097,152.00	1,888	\$531,831.12
Caswell	60	59	2008	\$0.65	\$1,547,308,689.00	2,916	\$530,627.12
Stanly	61	67	2013	\$0.64	\$4,511,398,511.00	8,808	\$512,193.29
Washington	62	69	2013	\$0.82	\$861,800,981.00	1,690	\$509,941.41
Lee	63	62	2013	\$0.72	\$5,048,868,559.00	9,954	\$507,220.07
Rockingham	64	64	2011	\$0.72	\$6,773,967,243.00	13,361	\$506,995.53
Yadkin	65	70	2009	\$0.72	\$2,760,343,214.00	5,463	\$505,279.74
Caldwell	66	77	2013	\$0.60	\$6,106,676,762.00	12,094	\$504,934.41
Davidson	67	65	2007	\$0.57	\$12,682,817,537.00	25,222	\$502,847.42
Alamance	68	61	2009	\$0.58	\$11,781,303,048.00	23,523	\$500,841.86
Union	69	63	2008	\$0.76	\$21,270,977,915.00	42,640	\$498,850.33
Alexander	70	68	2007	\$0.61	\$2,568,497,465.00	5,251	\$489,144.44
Pitt	71	72	2012	\$0.68	\$11,491,347,524.00	23,711	\$484,642.04
Gates	72	73	2009	\$0.83	\$797,127,405.00	1,650	\$483,107.52
Burke	73	58	2013	\$0.69	\$6,210,896,159.00	12,944	\$479,828.20
Cleveland	74	76	2008	\$0.77	\$7,548,409,296.00	15,821	\$477,113.29
Franklin	75	75	2012	\$0.84	\$4,405,255,447.00	9,295	\$473,938.19
Wilson	76	66	2008	\$0.80	\$6,224,807,713.00	13,151	\$473,333.41
Hertford	77	71	2011	\$0.93	\$1,417,535,893.00	3,029	\$467,988.08
Anson	78	78	2010	\$0.84	\$1,651,554,649.00	3,578	\$461,585.98
Surry	79	79	2012	\$0.58	\$5,341,637,659.00	11,634	\$459,140.25
Randolph	80	83	2007	\$0.62	\$10,307,903,697.00	22,934	\$449,459.48
Halifax	81	84	2007	\$0.69	\$3,619,518,390.00	8,055	\$449,350.51
Granville	82	80	2010	\$0.87	\$3,908,176,226.00	8,749	\$446,699.76
Gaston	83	82	2007	\$0.94	\$14,346,103,880.00	32,732	\$438,289.87
Edgecombe	84	87	2009	\$0.89	\$3,031,774,343.00	6,966	\$435,224.57
Bertie	85	74	2012	\$0.81	\$1,118,378,138.00	2,604	\$429,484.69
Lenoir	86	88	2009	\$0.83	\$3,978,786,169.00	9,325	\$426,679.48
Cumberland	87	86	2009	\$0.77	\$21,824,328,648.00	51,558	\$423,296.65
Duplin	88	85	2009	\$0.69	\$4,055,529,623.00	9,598	\$422,539.03
Nash	89	89	2009	\$0.67	\$7,054,852,541.00	16,918	\$417,002.75
Wayne	90	90	2011	\$0.67	\$7,830,354,109.00	19,104	\$409,880.34
Columbus	91	93	2013	\$0.75	\$3,641,269,021.00	9,086	\$400,756.00
Johnston	92	92	2011	\$0.78	\$13,804,483,327.00	34,511	\$400,002.41
Richmond	93	91	2008	\$0.84	\$3,023,791,477.00	7,599	\$397,919.66
Harnett	94	94	2009	\$0.75	\$7,714,777,197.00	20,122	\$383,400.12
Hoke	95	95	2006	\$0.71	\$3,033,359,657.00	8,393	\$361,415.42
Sampson	96	96	2011	\$0.81	\$4,052,644,739.00	11,518	\$351,853.16
Scotland	97	97	2011	\$1.08	\$2,001,667,553.00	6,013	\$332,890.00
Greene	98	98	2013	\$0.82	\$1,025,478,631.00	3,150	\$325,548.77
Vance	99	99	2008	\$1.01	\$2,369,333,515.00	7,349	\$322,402.17
Robeson	100	100	2010	\$0.76	\$6,066,402,474.00	23,704	\$255,923.16
State Total/Average				0.654	\$984,977,404,911.00	1,492,106	\$760,890.67

TABLE 2: ACTUAL EFFORT

This table reflects the actual dollar effort of communities to fund schools, without taking into account property wealth. This ranking is based on 2013-14 total current spending for each county (including supplemental school taxes), divided by the number of students attending public school in the county. High-wealth communities with corresponding high levels of spending tend to rank highest in this measure.

COUNTIES	RANK THIS YEAR	PREVIOUS YEAR'S RANK	2013-14 CURRENT SPENDING	2013-14 CURRENT SPENDING PER ADM	2013-14 SUPPLEMENTAL SCHOOL TAXES	2012-13 TOTAL CURRENT SPENDING (WITH SUPPLEMENTAL)	2013-14 FINAL ADM	TOTAL CURRENT SPENDING PER ADM
Orange	1	1	\$66,067,252.00	\$3,270	\$21,933,520	\$88,000,772	20,205	\$4,355
Dare	2	2	\$19,796,968.00	\$3,983	\$0	\$19,796,968	4,970	\$3,983
Durham	3	3	\$118,073,439.00	\$3,119	\$0	\$118,073,439	37,860	\$3,119
Chatham	4	4	\$25,551,130.00	\$2,822	\$0	\$25,551,130	9,054	\$2,822
Watauga	5	5	\$12,062,834.00	\$2,694	\$0	\$12,062,834	4,478	\$2,694
Transylvania	6	6	\$9,845,374.00	\$2,643	\$0	\$9,845,374	3,725	\$2,643
New Hanover	7	7	\$64,740,640.00	\$2,490	\$0	\$64,740,640	25,998	\$2,490
Brunswick	8	8	\$31,554,919.00	\$2,393	\$0	\$31,554,919	13,185	\$2,393
Guilford	9	9	\$177,130,398.00	\$2,351	\$0	\$177,130,398	75,340	\$2,351
Mecklenburg	10	11	\$354,244,548.00	\$2,312	\$0	\$354,244,548	153,193	\$2,312
Currituck	11	10	\$8,971,907.00	\$2,310	\$0	\$8,971,907	3,884	\$2,310
Carteret	12	13	\$18,850,000.00	\$2,191	\$0	\$18,850,000	8,604	\$2,191
Buncombe	13	14	\$56,388,063.00	\$1,849	\$8,142,348	\$64,530,411	30,493	\$2,116
Wake	14	15	\$323,966,127.00	\$2,033	\$0	\$323,966,127	159,357	\$2,033
Hyde	15	12	\$1,199,568.00	\$2,026	\$0	\$1,199,568	592	\$2,026
Polk	16	18	\$4,784,788.00	\$2,015	\$0	\$4,784,788	2,375	\$2,015
Forsyth	17	16	\$110,221,384.00	\$1,982	\$0	\$110,221,384	55,608	\$1,982
Haywood	18	20	\$14,391,679.00	\$1,938	\$0	\$14,391,679	7,426	\$1,938
Union	19	19	\$79,597,759.00	\$1,867	\$0	\$79,597,759	42,640	\$1,867
Moore	20	17	\$24,414,510.00	\$1,850	\$0	\$24,414,510	13,198	\$1,850
Avery	21	21	\$3,973,725.00	\$1,828	\$0	\$3,973,725	2,174	\$1,828
Macon	22	24	\$7,842,793.00	\$1,802	\$0	\$7,842,793	4,352	\$1,802
Pasquotank	23	22	\$10,004,858.00	\$1,771	\$0	\$10,004,858	5,648	\$1,771
Alleghany	24	23	\$2,468,742.00	\$1,722	\$0	\$2,468,742	1,434	\$1,722
Beaufort	25	26	\$12,445,150.00	\$1,718	\$0	\$12,445,150	7,244	\$1,718
Jackson	26	29	\$6,720,774.00	\$1,712	\$0	\$6,720,774	3,925	\$1,712
Gates	27	32	\$2,818,696.00	\$1,708	\$0	\$2,818,696	1,650	\$1,708
Scotland	28	25	\$10,139,325.00	\$1,686	\$0	\$10,139,325	6,013	\$1,686
Pamlico	29	40	\$2,562,453.00	\$1,681	\$0	\$2,562,453	1,524	\$1,681
Cherokee	30	49	\$5,729,338.00	\$1,644	\$0	\$5,729,338	3,486	\$1,644
Cabarrus	31	31	\$58,896,196.00	\$1,623	\$0	\$58,896,196	36,285	\$1,623
Onslow	32	28	\$40,529,260.00	\$1,616	\$0	\$40,529,260	25,084	\$1,616
Person	33	33	\$9,038,798.00	\$1,607	\$0	\$9,038,798	5,625	\$1,607
Rowan	34	30	\$31,789,444.00	\$1,604	\$0	\$31,789,444	19,813	\$1,604
Iredell	35	34	\$38,601,912.00	\$1,352	\$6,160,623	\$44,762,535	28,555	\$1,568
Stokes	36	39	\$10,211,763.00	\$1,557	\$0	\$10,211,763	6,558	\$1,557
Chowan	37	38	\$3,421,929.00	\$1,548	\$0	\$3,421,929	2,211	\$1,548
Lee	38	27	\$15,338,050.00	\$1,541	\$0	\$15,338,050	9,954	\$1,541
Henderson	39	37	\$20,943,846.00	\$1,527	\$0	\$20,943,846	13,716	\$1,527
Johnston	40	35	\$52,000,000.00	\$1,507	\$0	\$52,000,000	34,511	\$1,507
Pender	41	36	\$12,942,622.00	\$1,487	\$0	\$12,942,622	8,704	\$1,487
Warren	42	61	\$3,775,219.00	\$1,485	\$0	\$3,775,219	2,543	\$1,485
Pitt	43	43	\$35,076,287.00	\$1,479	\$0	\$35,076,287	23,711	\$1,479
Cumberland	44	42	\$76,220,676.00	\$1,478	\$0	\$76,220,676	51,558	\$1,478
Catawba	45	44	\$35,652,126.00	\$1,478	\$0	\$35,652,126	24,121	\$1,478
Martin	46	45	\$5,380,044.00	\$1,463	\$0	\$5,380,044	3,677	\$1,463
Davie	47	41	\$9,333,832.00	\$1,463	\$0	\$9,333,832	6,380	\$1,463
Granville	48	47	\$12,385,287.00	\$1,416	\$0	\$12,385,287	8,749	\$1,416
Ashe	49	55	\$4,448,032.00	\$1,409	\$0	\$4,448,032	3,157	\$1,409
Franklin	50	52	\$13,094,566.00	\$1,409	\$0	\$13,094,566	9,295	\$1,409
Hertford	51	48	\$4,173,524.00	\$1,378	\$0	\$4,173,524	3,029	\$1,378
Northampton	52	58	\$3,161,538.00	\$1,345	\$0	\$3,161,538	2,351	\$1,345
Lincoln	53	53	\$16,548,422.00	\$1,344	\$0	\$16,548,422	12,313	\$1,344
Cleveland	54	51	\$9,849,570.00	\$623	\$11,207,024	\$21,056,594	15,821	\$1,331
Alamance	55	50	\$30,977,274.00	\$1,317	\$0	\$30,977,274	23,523	\$1,317
Craven	56	62	\$18,951,126.00	\$1,313	\$0	\$18,951,126	14,433	\$1,313
Gaston	57	54	\$42,726,704.00	\$1,305	\$0	\$42,726,704	32,732	\$1,305
Wilson	58	59	\$17,155,274.00	\$1,304	\$0	\$17,155,274	13,151	\$1,304
Jones	59	66	\$1,425,292.00	\$1,297	\$0	\$1,425,292	1,099	\$1,297
Nash	60	57	\$21,182,431.00	\$1,252	\$725,000	\$21,907,431	16,918	\$1,295
Yancey	61	60	\$2,968,141.00	\$1,284	\$0	\$2,968,141	2,311	\$1,284
Davidson	62	63	\$29,152,488.00	\$1,156	\$2,865,065	\$32,017,553	25,222	\$1,269
Perquimans	63	64	\$2,200,000.00	\$1,242	\$0	\$2,200,000	1,771	\$1,242
Bladen	64	71	\$6,189,970.00	\$1,237	\$0	\$6,189,970	5,002	\$1,237
McDowell	65	70	\$7,653,263.00	\$1,204	\$0	\$7,653,263	6,359	\$1,204
Montgomery	66	46	\$4,998,796.00	\$1,203	\$0	\$4,998,796	4,157	\$1,203
Caldwell	67	67	\$14,525,000.00	\$1,201	\$0	\$14,525,000	12,094	\$1,201
Rutherford	68	56	\$11,246,442.00	\$1,192	\$0	\$11,246,442	9,438	\$1,192
Surry	69	65	\$12,177,164.00	\$1,047	\$1,675,566	\$13,852,730	11,634	\$1,191
Rockingham	70	68	\$15,834,840.00	\$1,185	\$0	\$15,834,840	13,361	\$1,185
Randolph	71	69	\$21,664,017.00	\$945	\$5,154,180	\$26,818,197	22,934	\$1,169
Wilkes	72	73	\$10,873,988.00	\$1,098	\$0	\$10,873,988	9,900	\$1,098
Stanly	73	77	\$9,570,868.00	\$1,087	\$0	\$9,570,868	8,808	\$1,087
Mitchell	74	78	\$2,122,622.00	\$1,080	\$0	\$2,122,622	1,965	\$1,080
Anson	75	83	\$3,832,250.00	\$1,071	\$0	\$3,832,250	3,578	\$1,071
Burke	76	82	\$13,828,400.00	\$1,068	\$0	\$13,828,400	12,944	\$1,068
Yadkin	77	74	\$5,800,431.00	\$1,062	\$0	\$5,800,431	5,463	\$1,062
Lenoir	78	75	\$9,900,000.00	\$1,062	\$0	\$9,900,000	9,325	\$1,062
Halifax	79	84	\$5,202,229.00	\$646	\$3,176,862	\$8,379,091	8,055	\$1,040
Harnett	80	76	\$20,523,700.00	\$1,020	\$243,385	\$20,767,085	20,122	\$1,032
Alexander	81	87	\$5,400,000.00	\$1,028	\$0	\$5,400,000	5,251	\$1,028
Tyrrell	82	86	\$537,320.00	\$1,001	\$0	\$537,320	537	\$1,001
Sampson	83	81	\$9,916,357.00	\$861	\$1,581,052	\$11,497,409	11,518	\$998
Wayne	84	80	\$19,017,994.00	\$995	\$0	\$19,017,994	19,104	\$995
Vance	85	85	\$7,202,440.00	\$980	\$0	\$7,202,440	7,349	\$980
Bertie	86	72	\$2,503,000.00	\$961	\$0	\$2,503,000	2,604	\$961
Edgecombe	87	88	\$6,666,857.00	\$957	\$0	\$6,666,857	6,966	\$957
Madison	88	92	\$2,368,901.00	\$941	\$0	\$2,368,901	2,518	\$941
Duplin	89	79	\$9,000,000.00	\$938	\$0	\$9,000,000	9,598	\$938
Richmond	90	89	\$6,924,932.00	\$911	\$0	\$6,924,932	7,599	\$911
Washington	91	91	\$1,525,000.00	\$902	\$0	\$1,525,000	1,690	\$902
Camden	92	90	\$1,703,000.00	\$902	\$0	\$1,703,000	1,888	\$902
Clay	93	96	\$1,177,191.00	\$884	\$0	\$1,177,191	1,332	\$884
Caswell	94	93	\$2,469,413.00	\$847	\$0	\$2,469,413	2,916	\$847
Columbus	95	94	\$6,902,401.00	\$760	\$0	\$6,902,401	9,086	\$760
Greene	96	95	\$2,168,000.00	\$688	\$0	\$2,168,000	3,150	\$688
Graham	97	97	\$747,383.00	\$628	\$0	\$747,383	1,190	\$628
Hoke	98	98	\$4,469,874.00	\$533	\$0	\$4,469,874	8,393	\$533
Robeson	99	99	\$12,375,000.00	\$522	\$0	\$12,375,000	23,704	\$522
Swain	100	100	\$788,843.00	\$383	\$0	\$788,843	2,058	\$383
State Total/Average			\$25,559,187.00	\$1,466	\$62,864,625	\$2,618,783,325	1,492,106	\$1,500

TABLE 2A: SIX-YEAR AVERAGE OF CAPITAL OUTLAY AND DEBT SERVICE

This table provides a six-year average of capital outlay and debt service, ordered according to the rankings from Table 2. In previous years' studies, this data was included in Table 2.

COUNTIES	ACTUAL EFFORT RANK THIS YEAR (FROM TABLE 2)	2013-14 TOTAL CURRENT SPENDING PER ADM (FROM TABLE 2)	SIX-YEAR CAPITAL OUTLAY AVERAGE	SIX-YEAR CAPITAL DEBT SERVICE AVERAGE	2013-14 FINAL ADM	CAPITAL OUTLAY SPENDING PER ADM	DEBT SERVICE PER ADM
Orange	1	\$4,355	\$11,458,484	\$17,033,885	20,205	56711	843.05
Dare	2	\$3,983	\$1,635,945	\$9,175,247	4,970	329.16	1846.13
Durham	3	\$3,119	\$35,639,969	\$15,484,235	37,860	941.36	408.99
Chatham	4	\$2,822	\$5,540,464	\$4,063,260	9,054	611.94	448.78
Watauga	5	\$2,694	\$7,188,997	\$6,921,069	4,478	1605.4	1545.57
Transylvania	6	\$2,643	\$1,503,951	\$2,475,950	3,725	403.75	664.68
New Hanover	7	\$2,490	\$12,430,240	\$18,875,351	25,998	478.12	726.03
Brunswick	8	\$2,393	\$7,806,481	\$5,476,520	13,185	592.07	415.36
Guilford	9	\$2,351	\$54,357,112	\$46,054,850	75,340	721.49	611.29
Mecklenburg	10	\$2,312	\$93,761,364	\$132,116,138	153,193	612.05	862.42
Currituck	11	\$2,310	\$2,440,642	\$1,820,416	3,884	628.38	468.7
Carteret	12	\$2,191	\$6,278,881	\$6,500,123	8,604	729.76	755.48
Buncombe	13	\$2,116	\$19,437,537	\$11,505,421	30,493	637.44	377.31
Wake	14	\$2,033	\$114,109,764	\$154,376,638	159,357	716.06	968.75
Hyde	15	\$2,026	\$736,076	\$71,381	592	1243.37	120.58
Polk	16	\$2,015	\$337,715	\$961,537	2,375	142.2	404.86
Forsyth	17	\$1,982	\$38,924,383	\$26,700,723	55,608	699.98	480.16
Haywood	18	\$1,938	\$800,338	\$2,332,666	7,426	107.78	314.12
Union	19	\$1,867	\$17,222,131	\$45,839,637	42,640	403.9	1075.04
Moore	20	\$1,850	\$5,104,385	\$6,163,310	13,198	386.75	466.99
Avery	21	\$1,828	\$1,906,631	\$1,510,120	2,174	877.02	694.63
Macon	22	\$1,802	\$5,472,949	\$4,235,168	4,352	1257.57	973.15
Pasquotank	23	\$1,771	\$706,764	\$2,443,765	5,648	125.14	432.68
Alleghany	24	\$1,722	\$906,178	\$605,317	1,434	631.92	422.12
Beaufort	25	\$1,718	\$1,174,553	\$2,078,847	7,244	162.14	286.97
Jackson	26	\$1,712	\$3,251,357	\$1,855,762	3,925	828.37	472.81
Gates	27	\$1,708	\$910,055	\$809,389	1,650	551.55	490.54
Scotland	28	\$1,686	\$877,001	\$528,620	6,013	145.85	87.91
Pamlico	29	\$1,681	\$193,394	\$471,303	1,524	126.9	309.25
Cherokee	30	\$1,644	\$1,320,167	\$1,053,714	3,486	378.71	302.27
Cabarrus	31	\$1,623	\$15,896,838	\$27,958,350	36,285	438.11	770.52
Onslow	32	\$1,616	\$6,369,826	\$7,915,063	25,084	253.94	315.54
Person	33	\$1,607	\$1,440,471	\$2,610,201	5,625	256.08	464.04
Rowan	34	\$1,604	\$2,349,587	\$9,397,776	19,813	118.59	474.32
Iredell	35	\$1,568	\$19,897,290	\$24,825,161	28,555	696.81	869.38
Stokes	36	\$1,557	\$5,191,399	\$2,093,597	6,558	791.61	319.24
Chowan	37	\$1,548	\$108,210	\$802,239	2,211	48.94	362.84
Lee	38	\$1,541	\$5,684,211	\$6,721,298	9,954	571.05	675.24
Henderson	39	\$1,527	\$6,153,588	\$4,966,146	13,716	448.64	362.07
Johnston	40	\$1,507	\$12,330,030	\$30,133,677	34,511	357.28	873.16
Pender	41	\$1,487	\$3,325,470	\$5,309,325	8,704	382.06	609.99
Warren	42	\$1,485	\$500,382	\$475,058	2,543	196.77	186.81
Pitt	43	\$1,479	\$8,579,514	\$8,248,697	23,711	361.84	347.88
Cumberland	44	\$1,478	\$17,873,809	\$4,957,854	51,558	346.67	96.16
Catawba	45	\$1,478	\$18,430,017	\$19,041,420	24,121	764.07	789.41
Martin	46	\$1,463	\$3,054,375	\$717,957	3,677	830.67	195.26
Davie	47	\$1,463	\$1,814,633	\$2,094,909	6,380	284.43	328.36
Granville	48	\$1,416	\$1,849,118	\$4,386,225	8,749	211.35	501.34
Ashe	49	\$1,409	\$690,842	\$1,507,169	3,157	218.83	477.41
Franklin	50	\$1,409	\$9,367,517	\$6,173,073	9,295	1007.8	664.13
Hertford	51	\$1,378	\$834,628	\$ -	3,029	275.55	0
Northampton	52	\$1,345	\$263,035	\$776,265	2,351	111.88	330.19
Lincoln	53	\$1,344	\$3,870,375	\$7,360,260	12,313	314.33	597.76
Cleveland	54	\$1,331	\$7,142,928	\$1,298,838	15,821	451.48	82.1
Alamance	55	\$1,317	\$2,048,253	\$6,176,470	23,523	87.07	262.57
Craven	56	\$1,313	\$1,596,175	\$5,116,811	14,433	110.59	354.52
Gaston	57	\$1,305	\$22,135,280	\$7,539,259	32,732	676.26	230.33
Wilson	58	\$1,304	\$1,915,258	\$4,022,265	13,151	145.64	305.85
Jones	59	\$1,297	\$105,142	\$16,736	1,099	95.67	15.23
Nash	60	\$1,295	\$9,995,729	\$1,658,057	16,918	590.83	98.01
Yancey	61	\$1,284	\$567,234	\$ -	2,311	245.45	0
Davidson	62	\$1,269	\$10,827,468	\$7,101,752	25,222	429.29	281.57
Perquimans	63	\$1,242	\$859,149	\$603,783	1,771	485.12	340.93
Bladen	64	\$1,237	\$450,801	\$1,376,935	5,002	90.12	275.28
McDowell	65	\$1,204	\$2,075,981	\$1,000,595	6,359	326.46	157.35
Montgomery	66	\$1,203	\$807,504	\$897,796	4,157	194.25	215.97
Caldwell	67	\$1,201	\$1,941,115	\$2,304,801	12,094	160.5	190.57
Rutherford	68	\$1,192	\$2,115,380	\$5,419,373	9,438	224.13	574.21
Surry	69	\$1,191	\$4,471,587	\$3,997,848	11,634	384.36	343.63
Rockingham	70	\$1,185	\$3,783,901	\$2,968,231	13,361	283.2	222.16
Randolph	71	\$1,169	\$7,072,680	\$10,930,612	22,934	308.39	476.61
Wilkes	72	\$1,098	\$2,276,994	\$4,025,897	9,900	230	406.66
Stanly	73	\$1,087	\$4,103,023	\$1,863,573	8,808	465.83	211.58
Mitchell	74	\$1,080	\$450,319	\$494,255	1,965	229.17	251.53
Anson	75	\$1,071	\$82,945	\$693,435	3,578	23.18	193.81
Burke	76	\$1,068	\$2,353,523	\$4,408,399	12,944	181.82	340.57
Yadkin	77	\$1,062	\$3,431,483	\$1,442,019	5,463	628.13	263.96
Lenoir	78	\$1,062	\$5,944,721	\$1,198,767	9,325	637.5	128.55
Halifax	79	\$1,040	\$1,474,013	\$1,325,110	8,055	182.99	164.51
Harnett	80	\$1,032	\$10,390,428	\$8,379,821	20,122	516.37	416.45
Alexander	81	\$1,028	\$163,662	\$1,191,839	5,251	31.17	226.97
Tyrrell	82	\$1,001	\$85,196	\$72,084	537	158.65	134.23
Sampson	83	\$998	\$4,630,466	\$6,389,904	11,518	402.02	554.78
Wayne	84	\$995	\$5,120,209	\$638,973	19,104	268.02	33.45
Vance	85	\$980	\$3,692,621	\$1,525,078	7,349	502.47	207.52
Bertie	86	\$961	\$539,134	\$483,147	2,604	207.04	185.54
Edgecombe	87	\$957	\$1,433,745	\$795,665	6,966	205.82	114.22
Madison	88	\$941	\$380,691	\$273,366	2,518	151.19	108.56
Duplin	89	\$938	\$1,695,794	\$1,185,551	9,598	176.68	123.52
Richmond	90	\$911	\$2,971,100	\$471,165	7,599	390.99	62
Washington	91	\$902	\$519,304	\$185,399	1,690	307.28	109.7
Camden	92	\$902	\$102,415	\$243,477	1,888	54.25	128.96
Clay	93	\$884	\$245,858	\$97,674	1,332	184.58	73.33
Caswell	94	\$847	\$395,514	\$569,480	2,916	135.64	195.29
Columbus	95	\$760	\$1,717,769	\$191,313	9,086	189.06	21.06
Greene	96	\$688	\$2,546,830	\$352,365	3,150	808.52	111.86
Graham	97	\$628	\$13,946	\$342,090	1,190	11.72	287.47
Hoke	98	\$533	\$4,001,016	\$1,253,047	8,393	476.71	149.3
Robeson	99	\$522	\$4,379,564	\$ -	23,704	184.76	0
Swain	100	\$383	\$475,563	\$720,072	2,058	231.08	349.89
State Total/Average		\$1,500	\$744,838,484	\$811,255,209	1,492,106	\$404	\$389

TABLE 5: RELATIVE EFFORT

This is a measure comparing Actual Effort (from Table 2) and Ability to Pay (from Table 4). Actual effort includes county appropriations for current expenses, and, when appropriate, supplemental tax levies for schools. Low-wealth counties with comparatively high spending levels have tended to rank highest on this measure.

COUNTY	RELATIVE EFFORT RANK: CURRENT SPENDING	ABILITY RANK	REVENUE PER ADM	EFFORT RANK	TOTAL CURRENT SPENDING PER ADM	EFFORT AS PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE PER STUDENT: CURRENT SPENDING
Scotland	1	97	\$2,146	28	\$1,686.23	78.60%
Gates	2	87	\$2,959	27	\$1,708.30	57.70%
Johnston	3	85	\$2,973	40	\$1,506.77	50.70%
Orange	4	13	\$8,827	1	\$4,355.40	49.30%
Franklin	5	86	\$2,967	50	\$1,408.78	47.50%
Stokes	6	70	\$3,346	36	\$1,557.15	46.50%
Granville	7	77	\$3,082	48	\$1,415.62	45.90%
Union	8	55	\$4,071	19	\$1,866.74	45.90%
Hertford	9	82	\$3,029	51	\$1,377.86	45.50%
Cleveland	10	80	\$3,070	54	\$1,330.93	43.40%
Rowan	11	58	\$3,795	34	\$1,604.47	42.30%
Vance	12	96	\$2,321	85	\$980.06	42.20%
Guilford	13	30	\$5,610	9	\$2,351.08	41.90%
Harnett	14	95	\$2,464	80	\$1,032.06	41.90%
Pasquotank	15	49	\$4,278	23	\$1,771.40	41.40%
Cumberland	16	59	\$3,759	44	\$1,478.35	39.30%
Sampson	17	93	\$2,555	83	\$998.21	39.10%
Lee	18	56	\$3,946	38	\$1,540.89	39.00%
Caldwell	19	78	\$3,077	67	\$1,201.01	39.00%
Bertie	20	94	\$2,489	86	\$961.21	38.60%
Martin	21	57	\$3,807	46	\$1,463.16	38.40%
Gaston	22	69	\$3,399	57	\$1,305.35	38.40%
Randolph	23	79	\$3,070	71	\$1,169.36	38.10%
Anson	24	90	\$2,837	75	\$1,071.06	37.80%
Durham	25	15	\$8,283	3	\$3,118.69	37.70%
McDowell	26	73	\$3,213	65	\$1,203.53	37.50%
Bladen	27	71	\$3,305	64	\$1,237.50	37.40%
Nash	28	68	\$3,463	60	\$1,294.92	37.40%
Forsyth	29	33	\$5,330	17	\$1,982.11	37.20%
Robeson	30	100	\$1,456	99	\$522.06	35.80%
Cherokee	31	43	\$4,596	30	\$1,643.53	35.80%
Cabarrus	32	44	\$4,543	31	\$1,623.16	35.70%
Pitt	33	52	\$4,141	43	\$1,479.33	35.70%
Richmond	34	92	\$2,570	90	\$911.30	35.50%
Wilson	35	60	\$3,685	58	\$1,304.48	35.40%
Pender	36	50	\$4,207	41	\$1,486.97	35.30%
Davidson	37	63	\$3,612	62	\$1,269.43	35.10%
Halifax	38	84	\$2,987	79	\$1,040.23	34.80%
Greene	39	99	\$2,000	96	\$688.25	34.40%
Chowan	40	46	\$4,502	37	\$1,547.68	34.40%
Rockingham	41	66	\$3,468	70	\$1,185.15	34.20%
Yadkin	42	76	\$3,140	77	\$1,061.77	33.80%
Alexander	43	81	\$3,048	81	\$1,028.38	33.70%
Person	44	40	\$4,775	33	\$1,606.90	33.70%
Burke	45	74	\$3,204	76	\$1,068.33	33.30%
Rutherford	46	65	\$3,587	68	\$1,191.61	33.20%
Edgecombe	47	88	\$2,911	87	\$957.06	32.90%
Surry	48	61	\$3,664	69	\$1,190.71	32.50%
Alamance	49	51	\$4,152	55	\$1,316.89	31.70%
Beaufort	50	31	\$5,462	25	\$1,717.99	31.50%
Northampton	51	48	\$4,354	52	\$1,344.76	30.90%
Lenoir	52	67	\$3,467	78	\$1,061.66	30.60%
Wilkes	53	64	\$3,600	72	\$1,098.38	30.50%
Haywood	54	24	\$6,393	18	\$1,938.01	30.30%
Wayne	55	72	\$3,287	84	\$995.50	30.30%
Warren	56	38	\$4,923	42	\$1,484.55	30.20%
Washington	57	83	\$3,008	91	\$902.37	30.00%
Stanly	58	62	\$3,628	73	\$1,086.61	30.00%
Duplin	59	75	\$3,165	89	\$937.70	29.60%
Chatham	60	12	\$9,567	4	\$2,822.08	29.50%
Catawba	61	36	\$5,012	45	\$1,478.05	29.50%
Caswell	62	89	\$2,873	94	\$846.85	29.50%
Montgomery	63	53	\$4,135	66	\$1,202.50	29.10%
Columbus	64	91	\$2,628	95	\$759.67	28.90%
Lincoln	65	41	\$4,691	53	\$1,343.98	28.70%
Davie	66	34	\$5,188	47	\$1,462.98	28.20%
Onslow	67	29	\$5,886	32	\$1,615.74	27.40%
Transylvania	68	11	\$9,815	6	\$2,643.05	26.90%
Mecklenburg	69	14	\$8,726	10	\$2,312.41	26.50%
Hoke	70	98	\$2,012	98	\$532.57	26.50%
Buncombe	71	17	\$8,015	13	\$2,116.24	26.40%
Iredell	72	28	\$5,939	35	\$1,567.59	26.40%
Jones	73	37	\$4,967	59	\$1,296.90	26.10%
Alleghany	74	22	\$6,598	24	\$1,721.58	26.10%
Craven	75	35	\$5,095	56	\$1,313.04	25.80%
Wake	76	19	\$7,981	14	\$2,032.96	25.50%
Polk	77	18	\$7,994	16	\$2,014.65	25.20%
Henderson	78	25	\$6,262	39	\$1,526.96	24.40%
New Hanover	79	10	\$10,236	7	\$2,490.22	24.30%
Moore	80	20	\$7,813	20	\$1,849.86	23.70%
Mitchell	81	39	\$4,806	74	\$1,080.21	22.50%
Tyrrell	82	45	\$4,528	82	\$1,000.60	22.10%
Camden	83	54	\$4,123	92	\$902.01	21.90%
Watauga	84	4	\$12,428	5	\$2,693.80	21.70%
Ashe	85	21	\$6,669	49	\$1,408.94	21.10%
Pamlico	86	16	\$8,033	29	\$1,681.40	20.90%
Yancey	87	26	\$6,159	61	\$1,284.35	20.90%
Madison	88	42	\$4,684	88	\$940.79	20.10%
Brunswick	89	5	\$12,010	8	\$2,393.24	19.90%
Currituck	90	6	\$11,859	11	\$2,309.97	19.50%
Hyde	91	9	\$10,495	15	\$2,026.30	19.30%
Perquimans	92	23	\$6,505	63	\$1,242.24	19.10%
Dare	93	1	\$24,445	2	\$3,983.29	16.30%
Macon	94	8	\$11,180	22	\$1,802.11	16.10%
Avery	95	7	\$11,460	21	\$1,827.84	15.90%
Carteret	96	2	\$14,180	12	\$2,190.84	15.40%
Clay	97	27	\$6,038	93	\$883.78	14.60%
Jackson	98	3	\$12,638	26	\$1,712.30	13.50%
Graham	99	32	\$5,345	97	\$628.05	11.80%
Swain	100	47	\$4,451	100	\$383.31	8.60%
State Total/Average			\$5,325		\$1,500	32%

> GLOSSARY

Ability to Pay: A measure of a county's per student fiscal capacity to support local public schools. It is a combined measure of revenue that would have been generated at the state average tax rate based on 2013-14 property valuations per student (adjusted to reflect current market prices and to account for differences in income levels) and the value of non-property tax revenues, such as the county's share of local option sales tax, local tax aid (including reimbursements for inventory tax revenues, homestead exclusions, food stamp distribution, and the intangibles tax), and fines and forfeitures. Each county's mandated social service payments were subtracted from the total adjusted revenues. (See Table 4.)

Actual Effort: Includes 2013-14 current expenses (including supplemental school taxes); reflects the actual dollar effort of counties to fund local public schools without taking into account property wealth. (See Tables 2 and 3.)

Adjusted Tax Base: The total valuation of real, tangible, and public utility property for a county, adjusted using a three-year weighted average of the sales assessment ratio. Notes about adjustment and weighted average: In North Carolina, residential and commercial property typically is revalued once every eight years. The longer it has been since properties in a county have been revalued, the more likely it is that the market value of property exceeds the assessed valuation. To help remedy this difficulty of estimating the market value of property valuations, the Department of Revenue computes an adjusted property tax rate for each county by using the ratio of assessed property value to market value. Typically, the longer the gap between revaluations, the larger the difference between market and assessed value. In effort to be as accurate as possible, this study uses a three-year weighted average to calculate the adjusted property valuation.

Average Daily Membership (ADM): The sum of the number of days in membership for all students in each county's local public schools, divided by the number of school days in the term. City school districts are combined with the county system and charter school enrollment is included (see Charter School Enrollment under "Notes on Methodology").

Capital Outlay: A six-year average of public school capital outlay using proceeds from local option sales taxes and other sources to fund actual spending on capital projects or equipment for buildings. Withdrawals from the Public School Building Capital Fund, Grants from the Public School Building Bond Fund, and the North Carolina Education Lottery Funds have been removed from the county total.

Capital Outlay per ADM: Six-year average of capital outlay spending for a county divided by the ADM for the county.

Current Spending: The most recent current expense appropriation by the county to the public schools, as reported in the audited financial statement of the local board(s) of education.

Current Spending per ADM: The total amount of spending for a county divided by the ADM for the county.

Debt Service: A six-year average of public school debt service outlay using proceeds from local option sales taxes and other

sources to fund school bond repayments and lease purchase agreements. Using the Public School Capital Outlay report, withdrawals from the Public School Building Capital Fund and North Carolina Education Lottery Funds have been removed from the county total.

Debt Service per ADM: Six-year average of debt service spending for a county divided by the ADM for the county.

Income-Adjusted Total Revenues: The total revenues for a county, minus the amount paid in mandated social security payments, multiplied by the percent of state average per capita income.

Low-Wealth Funding: Supplemental state funding intended to enhance instructional programs in counties designated as low-wealth based on a formula that examines the ability to generate revenue per student below the state average. In addition, the formula takes into account county adjusted property tax base, square miles in the county and per capita income.

Mandated Social Services Payments: The amount of money each county pays in the health and human services categories mandated by the state. These categories include public assistance and Work First services. In previous studies, the Mandated Social Services Payments reported in Table 4 included county Medicaid payments in addition to other required social services payments. This year's study does not include Medicaid payments as part of the overall Mandated Social Services Payments. The WD667 report from the NC Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Controller, which includes county Medicaid payments, was not available for the 2013-14 year. In almost every county, the Medicaid total from the WD667 in previous years was less than 0.5% of the total Mandated Social Services Payments, which itself is a small piece of the revenue calculation in Table 4.

Non-Property Tax Revenue: Sources of revenue for the county other than property taxes. Examples include the sales tax, fines/forfeitures, and local tax aid.

Relative Effort: A measure comparing the Actual Effort of a county to its Ability to Pay. In general, low-wealth districts with comparatively high spending levels rank highest in this measure. (See Table 5)

Small County Funding: Supplemental state funding provided to two categories of local education agencies: those with less than 3,239 ADM, and those with 3,239-4,080 ADM who have an adjusted property tax base less than the state average.

State Average Effective Property Tax: The average of all 100 counties' adjusted tax rates.

Supplemental School Taxes: According to GS 115C-501(a), "a special tax to supplement the funds from State and county allotments and thereby operate schools of a higher standard by supplementing any item of expenditure in the school budget."

Total Current Spending per ADM: The sum of the current expense and the supplemental school taxes for a county, divided by the county's ADM.

> DATA SOURCES

The 2016 Local School Finance Study examines data from the 2013-14 school year. Every effort has been made to verify that the data included in this year's study is accurate and reflects what it intends to measure.

The primary source of financial information is the Division of School Business at the Department of Public Instruction, which provided data on non-property tax revenue, low-wealth and small county supplemental funding information, final average daily membership (except as noted above for charter school enrollments), effective county tax rate, adjusted revenue tax base, current expense, and other data found in the Division's helpful Facts & Figures, Highlights of the NC Public School Budget, and online Statistical Profile.

Other sources include the North Carolina Department of Revenue's County Property Tax Rates and Revaluation Schedules and Sales Assessment Ratio Studies, which provided the 2013-14 property tax valuations and tax rates; the Department of Revenue's data on Local Government Sales and Use Tax Distribution; and the North Carolina Department of State Treasurer's Report on County Spending on Public School Capital Outlays. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services provided data for the mandated social services expenditures, and the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts provided data on fines and forfeitures. Per capita income was obtained through the United States Bureau of Economic Analysis.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This year's study was authored by Emma Swift Lee and Joe Ableidinger, with research assistance from Allison Hawkins. The authors thank Keith Poston, Forum President and Executive Director; Lauren Bock, Senior Policy Analyst; Dr. Michael Priddy, Forum Board Chair; and Aaron Beaulieu, Forum Member, for their guidance and thought partnership throughout the research and drafting processes that resulted in the new study format in 2014. The Forum also thanks the following individuals for their insights and contributions to the study: Alesha Daughtrey, Kendall Hageman, Kesha B. Howell, Preeta Nayak, Alexis Schauss, and Deanna Townsend-Smith. All errors are our own.

The 2016 Local School Finance Study and prior years' versions are available online at <http://www.ncforum.org>. Contact the Forum to inquire about pricing information for hard copies of the study.



Public School Forum of North Carolina
3739 National Drive, Suite 100, Raleigh, NC 27612
Phone: 919.781.6833 Fax: 919.781.6527
www.ncforum.org