



WEIGHTED STUDENT FUNDING IN NORTH CAROLINA

*Opportunities, Challenges,
and Recommendations*



AUGUST 2026

NCForum.org

Weighted Student Funding in North Carolina:
Opportunities, Challenges, and Recommendations

Suggested citation:

Public School Forum of North Carolina. (August 2026).
Weighted Student Funding in North Carolina: Opportunities,
Challenges, and Recommendations.

<https://www.ncforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/WSF-Report.pdf>.

© 2026 Public School Forum of North Carolina
PO Box 18284
Raleigh, NC 27619
(919) 781-6833 | [ncforum.org](https://www.ncforum.org)

All rights reserved.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Forum would like to thank all study group participants for lending their time and deep expertise to this process. We are also grateful to Bellwether and Ed Trust-TN for their partnership, support, and guidance.

This report was authored by Elizabeth Paul with support from Dr. Lauren Fox and Jennifer Rifkin. Modeling was done by Elizabeth Paul with support from Bellwether.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	2
Introduction	8
Weighted Student Funding Explainer	13
Study Group	19
Exploring Weighted Student Funding in NC + Findings	27
Recommendations and Next Steps	43
Appendices	50
References	71



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For over 90 years, North Carolina has funded its schools primarily through a resource-allocation model, which determines the total cost of education based on the cost of resources, such as educators and administration. For at least a decade, policymakers and other education leaders have floated the possibility of transitioning the state instead to a weighted student funding model, which would provide a base amount of funding for each student, with additional funding allocated based on their specific needs.

Recognizing that our school funding model is in need of improvement and that any changes to the model require careful consideration and input from diverse perspectives in education, the Public School Forum of North Carolina launched a comprehensive, two-year study to better understand the implications of switching to a weighted student funding model and to gather insight from representatives across the education sector.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

This report presents findings and recommendations from the Public School Forum's study group on weighted student funding. Beginning in the spring of 2024, the Forum convened a statewide group of over 100 education leaders, elected officials, and school finance experts to identify needs and opportunities for strengthening North Carolina's school funding system and to better understand and evaluate the potential impact of transitioning to a weighted student funding model in North Carolina.

In partnership with national experts from [Bellwether](#), the Forum used current state education data to build several model prototypes and an interactive simulator to allow study group members to examine how different funding formulas would impact funding levels and allocations for students' needs in each district across the state. Study group members engaged in rich discussion and collaboratively developed a set of guiding principles, non-negotiables, and recommendations to inform next steps as state leaders continue discussions around how to fund our public schools.

Study group participants included district superintendents, school finance officers, school board members, principals, teachers, business leaders, members of the General Assembly, representatives from the Department of Public Instruction, the Governor's Office, and the State Board of Education, and leaders from statewide organizations representing a wide range of education stakeholder groups.

Together, the group developed the following guiding principles and non-negotiables to guide model prototypes and analysis of any change to North Carolina's funding model.

Guiding Principles



Robust



Supportive



Transparent



**Predictable/
Stable**



Responsible



Flexible

Non-Negotiables



**No Districts
Should Lose
Funding**



**Evaluation
for Change**



**Implementation
Support**

WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED

Study group participants agreed that North Carolina's current public school funding model is outdated, complex, and difficult for local leaders to navigate. The current structure limits flexibility, restricts local decision-making, and does not consistently align funding with student needs.

Participants also highlighted that while improvements to our funding model would be impactful for students, we must concurrently address the issue of funding adequacy. Research consistently shows that greater investment in public education leads to stronger academic outcomes, workforce development, and long-term economic growth.¹ At current funding levels, districts in North Carolina often struggle to provide even the most fundamental resources needed to educate their students.

North Carolina needs a modern, fully-funded school finance system that is transparent, accountable, predictable, student-centered, and responsive—one that empowers local educators to implement innovative learning strategies, addresses the differentiated needs of students and communities, and provides every student with the resources necessary for lifelong success. A weighted student funding formula is one approach that could help to advance these goals, but getting the details right – from formula structure and funding levels to the implementation process and evaluation – will be of critical importance.

WHAT IS WEIGHTED STUDENT FUNDING?

Weighted student funding is an approach to state school finance that allocates dollars to districts based on student population and need. A weighted student funding formula provides a base amount of funding to all students with additional funding stacked on top for defined characteristics through both student and community weights. Students can receive multiple weights, provided that they are eligible for each category.

For example, under a weighted student funding system, a low-income student with a disability would receive a baseline dollar amount plus additional funding (a percentage of the base amount) to provide supplementary learning supports through both a low-income and disability weight. The weights account for higher operational costs required to serve students with unique needs.

Nationally, states with weighted student funding formulas commonly implement specific weights for students with disabilities, those who are economically disadvantaged, multilingual learners, and children living in areas of concentrated poverty or sparse populations. The below graphic shows how funding is generated for a student who is economically disadvantaged and a multilingual learner.



Source: Bellwether

MODELING AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

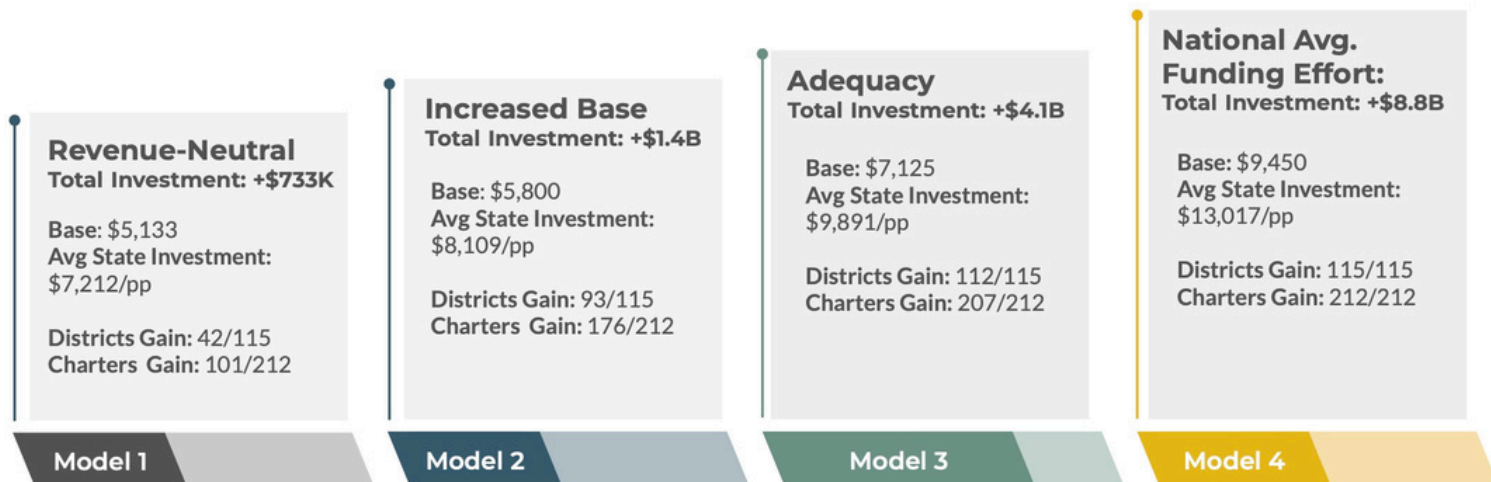
After studying weighted student funding models from across the country, the Forum's study group analyzed four funding scenarios using North Carolina's 2024-25 student data. Each scenario applied the same student weights (which were agreed upon by study group members), while varying the overall level of investment, allowing the study group to evaluate how different funding levels would affect districts and student populations.

Scenario Weighted Student Funding Weights for Models 1-4

Economically Disadvantaged	40%
Students with Disabilities	110-150%
Multilingual Learners	17.5%
Academically/Intellectually Gifted	5%
Career and Technical Education	16.1%
Sparsity	Up to 25%
Concentrated Poverty	5%

Overview of Scenario Modeling at Various Investment Levels

Using the weights described, the following four models demonstrate the potential impact on total per-pupil expenditures across districts with different base and total investment levels.



Through the scenario model comparisons, the study group identified a number of **key takeaways** that provide important context for any potential transition to a weighted student funding model in North Carolina.

- Higher-investment models would offer greater equity and **opportunity for district innovation and student success**.
- Each of the four model prototypes would result in a **more equitable distribution of resources for students with greater need**, including students in poverty, students with disabilities, and multilingual learners.
- Redistributing existing funding **without increasing overall investment** would result in significant funding losses for most traditional public school districts.
- The state's **smallest districts** would experience more significant losses under multiple weighted funding scenarios.

RECOMMENDATIONS

These findings informed the study group's recommendations for policymakers as they consider changes to North Carolina's school funding formula.

Recommendation

Why it Matters



Align any new funding formula with the study group's guiding principles and non-negotiables.

Creates a funding system that is equitable, transparent, predictable, flexible, and sustainable while ensuring districts have the support necessary to implement change successfully.



Significantly increase state investment in public schools.

Significant additional funding will be required in order to prevent funding losses during the transition and to provide resources for all students to succeed.



Target additional funding to the students and communities with the greatest needs.

Directs resources where they can have the greatest impact, helping reduce opportunity gaps and improve outcomes for students facing the greatest barriers.



Continuously evaluate and improve the funding formula.

Keeps the formula responsive to changing student needs, economic conditions, and inflation so funding remains fair and effective over time. Ensures that targeted funding is reaching students who need it most and improving student outcomes.



Implement low-cost adjustments to the current formula in the short-term

Provides immediate support to students and districts across the state.



INTRODUCTION

North Carolina's public schools are one of our state's greatest achievements. They are a source of pride, hope, and connection for local communities in every corner of the state. North Carolinians have long demonstrated their commitment to and belief in the importance of public education, and that commitment is enshrined in our state constitution that established the constitutional right to public education and the ultimate responsibility of the General Assembly to fund our public schools. As a result, public education comprises the largest portion of our state's budget overall.

Research has clearly demonstrated the importance of school funding in shaping opportunities and outcomes for students in the short and long term. School funding matters, both with regard to the total investment level and how that money is allocated and spent. Getting school funding right is of critical importance not only for individual students, educators, schools and districts, but for all of us who rely on our schools as drivers of success and well-being for our communities as a whole.

NORTH CAROLINA'S SCHOOL FUNDING SYSTEM

In North Carolina, the North Carolina General Assembly holds the constitutional responsibility to fund public education. The North Carolina Constitution states:

The people have a right to the privilege of education, and it is the duty of the State to guard and maintain that right...The General Assembly shall provide by taxation and otherwise for a general and uniform system of free public schools...wherein equal opportunities shall be provided for all students.

Subsequent state laws, including the School Machinery Act (1933) and the School Budget and Fiscal Control Act (1975) reinforce the state's responsibility for funding operational costs for public schools, while counties are primarily responsible for carrying the cost of school facilities, maintenance, and capital expenses. Unlike many other states, North Carolina school districts do not have independent taxing authority and instead rely on county governments to appropriate local education funding. Counties' ability to generate revenue for education and other services and infrastructure relies largely on property wealth and property tax rates, which vary significantly across counties.²

Funding Model

North Carolina is one of only a handful of states that currently uses a resource allocation model to primarily fund its public schools. Under this system, the state allocates funding through over 40 separate allotment categories tied to positions, programs, and services.

These allotments generally fall into two categories: position allotments and dollar allotments.

Position allotments are generated primarily through formulas based on student population or Average Daily Membership (ADM) and provide schools with funded positions rather than fixed dollar amounts. LEAs can hire an allowable number of certified staff without being constrained by a set dollar amount within the allotment. Many districts value this flexibility because it allows them to hire experienced or highly qualified educators regardless of where they fall on the state salary schedule.

Dollar allotments provide Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with specified amounts for instructional support, such as textbooks, classroom materials, or teacher assistants (TAs) and often have requirements for how these funds are spent. Some dollar allotments fall into categorical allotments in order to address differences in student and district characteristics, such as At Risk Student Services and Low Wealth Supplemental Funding.

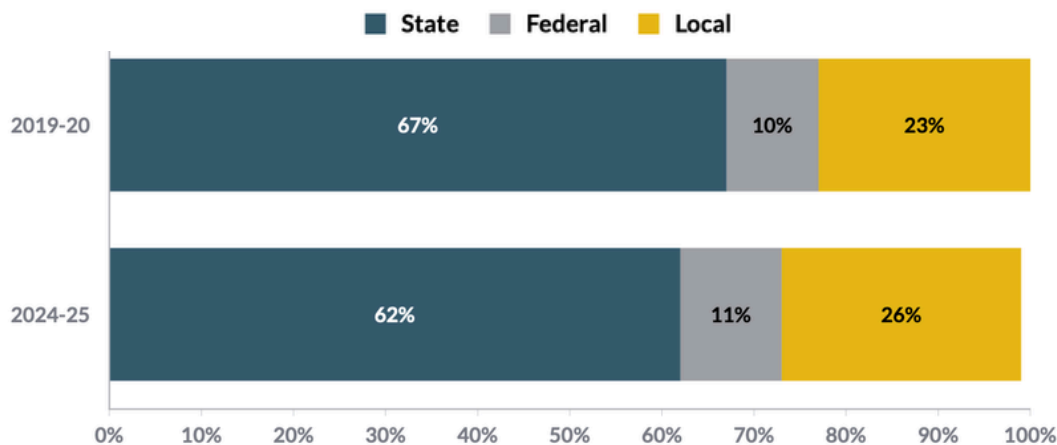
Funds for these allotments are generated primarily through three types of formulas:³

- **Base allotments (approximately 80% of state education spending):** Funding available to all LEAs to support core instructional costs and staffing.
- **Student characteristic allotments (approximately 16%):** Funding targeted toward students with additional needs, including students with disabilities and English learners. Some allotments are subject to funding caps.
- **LEA characteristic allotments (approximately 3%):** Supplemental funding for low-wealth and small counties intended to account for differences in local fiscal capacity and district size.

Sources of Funds for Public Schools

While the NC General Assembly is, by law, responsible for funding operating expenses for public schools, most recent data show that the state is actually covering about 62% of these costs, while 26% are provided by local governments and 11% by federal sources.⁴ The state share has declined by roughly five percentage points since 2019.

Operational Expenditures by Source of Funds



Data Source: NCDPI Statistical Profile Table 22. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

Calls to reform North Carolina's school funding system are not new, with proposed solutions centering on both the need to increase funding overall and change how funding is allocated.

Litigation

North Carolina's history of school funding litigation, most notably the decades-long Leandro case, reflects ongoing concerns over whether public school students receive adequate resources to achieve success and whether the state is fulfilling its constitutional obligation to provide equal educational opportunities to all students. Filed in 1994 by families and school districts in Hoke, Halifax, Robeson, Cumberland, and Vance counties, the lawsuit argued that a heavy reliance on local property taxes created severe resource disparities that denied students access to a meaningful education. The plaintiffs successfully contended that the state constitution guarantees every child the opportunity to receive a "sound basic education."⁵

In the landmark 1997 ruling, the North Carolina Supreme Court affirmed that constitutional right. A subsequent 2004 ruling found the state in violation of this duty, citing deficiencies in qualified teachers, principals, and educational resources, particularly for “at-risk students.” Courts later ordered the development and implementation of a comprehensive remedial plan, commonly referred to as the Leandro Plan, based on extensive research on the resources and investments necessary to ensure that the state is meeting its constitutional obligation to students.⁶

Most recently, however, the North Carolina Supreme Court closed the decades-long case and limited courts’ authority to compel state spending without legislative approval. While the constitutional right to a sound basic education remains intact, responsibility for achieving compliance now rests squarely with the General Assembly.⁷

NC General Assembly

In 2016, the North Carolina General Assembly’s Program Evaluation Division released a report concluding that the state’s allotment system was overly complex, difficult to understand, and in need of significant reform.⁸ The report highlighted challenges related to transparency, flexibility, and the ability of the current model to align funding with actual student needs.

In response to growing interest in school finance reform, Senators Michael Lee, Amy Galey, and Lisa Barnes introduced legislation in 2023 to transition the state from its current resource allocation model to a weighted student funding model.⁹ While the bill did not pass, policymakers have remained interested in a potential shift; the 2026 state budget included a provision to create a Weighted Student Funding Work Group to examine the following:¹⁰

1. Options to do at least the following under the new funding formula:
 - a. Consolidate nonteaching support funds into a per pupil-based allotment with significant flexibility.
 - b. Transition teacher pay from a position allotment to a dollar allotment based on average daily membership in order to maintain student-based funding with greater average teacher pay transparency and flexibility.
 - c. Reassign all project- or resource-based funding into a set of designated line items.
 - d. Determine whether need-based funds can be consolidated and transitioned into a per pupil figure.
 - e. Report on spending and provide any other needed accountability for the use of State funds.

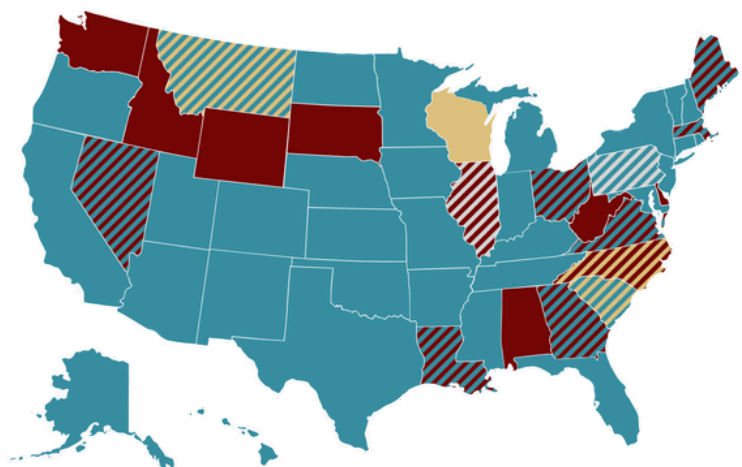
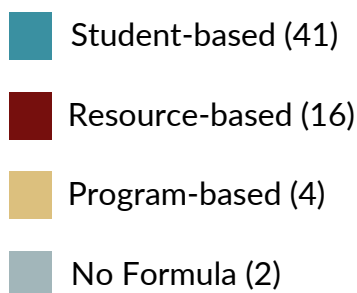
2. Whether to transition from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to the State Education Assistance Authority the responsibility of disbursing any funds to local school administrative units.

National Trends

At the same time, national momentum around weighted student funding models has continued to accelerate. More than 40 states now incorporate student-based funding elements into their school finance formulas, including several states neighboring North Carolina.¹¹ In 2021, Tennessee Governor Bill Lee announced a comprehensive review of the state's education funding system, resulting in the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement Act (TISA), which was adopted in 2022, implemented during the 2023-24 school year, and paired with an additional state investment of \$1 billion.¹² Mississippi followed in 2024 with passage of the Mississippi Student Funding Formula (MSFF), paired with an additional \$240 million in funding to support implementation and account for the formula transition.¹³

These examples are notable not simply because states changed their formulas, but because they paired structural reform with additional investment. Across states, there is growing recognition that changing funding formulas alone does not produce more equitable outcomes if overall funding levels remain inadequate, especially when paired with an allocation structure that prioritizes student need. This remains especially relevant in North Carolina, where the state continues to fall short of full compliance with the constitutional obligations outlined in the Leandro decisions. The Forum's study group explored the implications of a weighted student reform model within and beyond these constraints.

State Funding Formula Types¹⁴



Source: EdBuild



WEIGHTED STUDENT FUNDING EXPLAINER

Weighted student funding is an approach to state school finance that allocates dollars to districts based on student population and need. A weighted student funding formula provides a base amount of funding to all students with additional funding stacked on top for defined characteristics through both student and community weights. Students can receive multiple weights, provided that they are eligible for each category.

For example, under a weighted student funding system, a low-income student with a disability would receive a baseline dollar amount plus additional funding (a percentage of the base amount) to provide supplementary learning supports through both a low-income and disability weight. The weights account for higher operational costs required to serve students with unique needs.

Nationally, states with weighted student funding formulas commonly implement specific weights for students with disabilities, those who are economically disadvantaged, multilingual learners, and children living in areas of concentrated poverty or sparse populations.

Notably, weighted student funding formulas function strictly as state and/or local-level mechanisms and have no bearing on federal funding streams. Like most state funding formulas, weighted student funding models establish an amount of funding per district based on their unique student population. After the total is determined, many states use a cost-share model to split the financial burden between state and local governments, taking into account unique state school finance laws and the local governments' capacity to generate revenue based on property wealth.

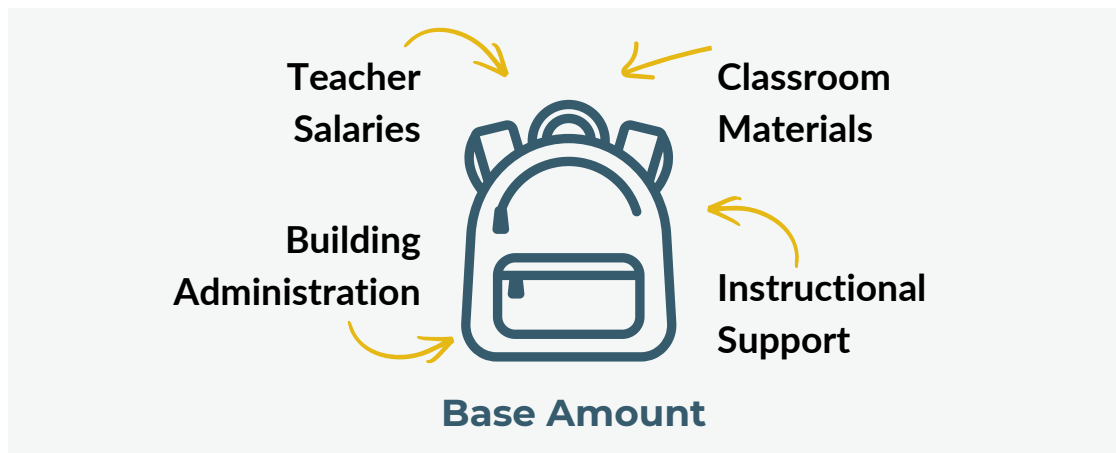
KEY COMPONENTS OF WEIGHTED STUDENT FUNDING

States facing funding constraints often must balance investing in a robust foundational base amount versus targeting resources to specific students through higher weights. A high-base, low-weight approach provides a larger, more uniform funding floor for all students, offering more stability but also potentially underfunding certain demographics of students. Conversely, a low-base, high-weight model directs more revenue towards specialized student needs, which could make funding more equitable but may result in overall funding inadequacy and instability over time as student demographics shift.

Understanding the Base

The base is the foundational building block of a weighted student funding formula, allocated to every student. **The base should represent the cost of educating a student without any additional need.** All student weights are calculated as a percentage of the base, meaning any increase or decrease in the base amount will impact the entire formula.

States should determine the base amount in a weighted student funding formula through engagement with education stakeholders to evaluate the actual costs of a standard classroom, including educator salaries and benefits, instructional materials, and core operational costs, along with an evaluation of the current system and available revenue. In order to ensure that the base amount remains flexible, states generally avoid using rigid, itemized formulas or lists of costs to calculate the base amount. Instead, formulas often require periodic re-calculation and/or scheduled inflationary adjustments to ensure the funding floor keeps pace with real-world economic pressures and current district needs.¹⁵



Understanding the Weights

Weighted student funding formulas often include both student weights and community/district weights. Student weights are those that address individual student characteristics, including socioeconomic status, disability status, or specific grade level needs, such as additional literacy support for 3rd graders. Community weights address district-wide needs that can have compounding effects on instructional and operational costs, including concentrated poverty or rurality.

Beyond student and community weights, there are a number of other expenses or policy priorities that may not fit neatly into a weighted funding formula. States often fund these auxiliary costs separately from the core model. For example, transportation costs are often carved out as a separate, independent categorical allotment based on district transit needs rather than being rolled into the weighted student funding structure.

Common Components in Weighted Student Funding Formulas

Student Weights

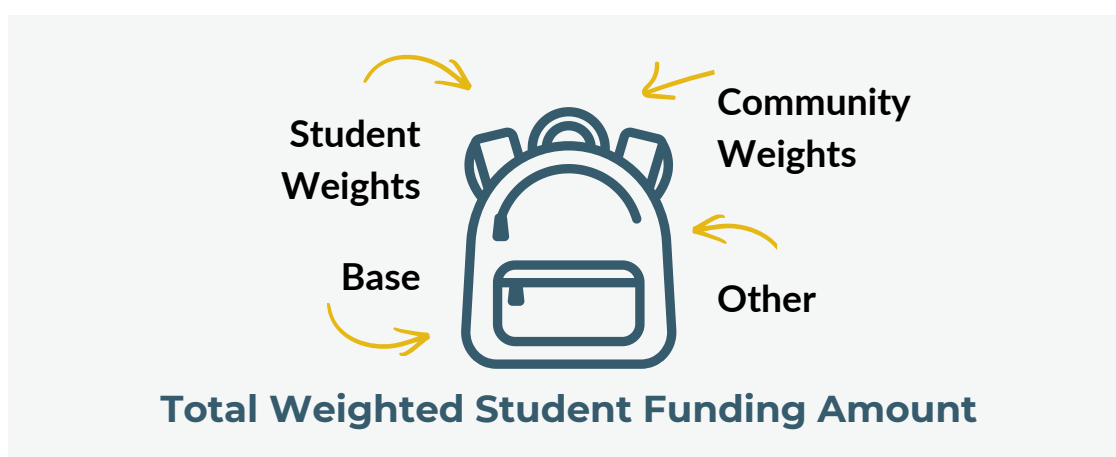
- Economically Disadvantaged
- Students with Disabilities
- Multilingual Learners
- Career and Technical Education Enrollment
- Academically and Intellectually Gifted

Community Weights

- Concentrated Poverty
- Rurality
- Small District

Programmatic and Other

- Transportation
- Early Childhood
- Dual Enrollment
- Advanced Teaching Roles



WEIGHTED STUDENT FUNDING IN PRACTICE

Nationally, 41 states currently utilize weighted student funding in some form, with several states, including Tennessee and Mississippi, making the shift to weighted student funding in the past few years.¹⁶ Appendix A provides an overview of student-based funding in select southern states.

Tennessee

In 2022, Tennessee adopted the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA) weighted student funding formula, along with an additional annual recurring state investment of \$1 billion.¹⁷ TISA went into effect in the 2023-24 school year and represents a shift from Tennessee's former resource-based model. In the 2025-26 school year, TISA provided a per-student base amount of \$7,295, with additional weights for economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and multilingual learners. The model also includes weights for districts with high rates of poverty, small student populations, and sparsely populated areas. In addition to weights, TISA also includes direct categorical funding for K-3 literacy, 4th grade remedial literacy, CTE programs, and charter schools, along with supplemental funding to incentivize student achievement.¹⁸

TISA utilizes a state and local share policy for the total amount of funding generated from the base and weight calculations. The state covers 70% of the formula, while the remaining 30% generated from local revenue based on fiscal capacity. In 2024-25, the base and weights combined required a total of \$8.7 billion for districts across the state to support Tennessee's 967,000 students.¹⁹ Of this, \$6.1 billion (70%) was funded by the state, and the remaining 30% was covered by districts (\$2.6 billion). The state covers 100% of the additional direct categorical and outcomes funding.

Mississippi

In 2024, Mississippi followed a similar path, adopting its own weighted student funding model known as the Mississippi Student Funding Formula (MSFF), which went into effect starting in the 2024-25 school year. In 2025-26, MSFF provided a base amount of \$6,847 to all students based on district enrollment with additional weights for low-income students, students with disabilities, multilingual learners, gifted students, CTE programs, and districts with concentrated poverty.²⁰ The formula also includes an additional sparsity multiplier for districts with no more than 8 students per square mile. The policy governing MSFF requires a base recalculation every four years, plus an annual inflationary adjustment.²¹

MSFF also requires a local share contribution, with local governments expected to contribute the lesser of \$28 per \$1000 in assessed property value or 27% of the total formula cost. In 2025-26, the formula required a total appropriation of \$3.7 billion with the state covering \$3 billion and locals covering \$776 million for Mississippi's 424,534 students.^{22, 23}

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF WEIGHTED STUDENT FUNDING FORMULAS

Well-designed weighted student funding models can result in more equitable funding distribution, increased financial transparency, and more flexibility for school and district leaders to allocate funds where they are most needed. **Of course, a formula is only as equitable, transparent, and flexible as the policy and implementation behind it; additional or unfunded state mandates or complexity can hinder or negate some of these potential benefits.**

Equity

Under a weighted student funding model, students and communities with greater need require higher costs, and thus receive more funding. For example, students with disabilities may require additional staff or services and students living in poverty may need wraparound services or additional learning hours. At the community level, rural areas or those with smaller student populations have higher per-pupil operational costs. The weighted student funding structure allows for targeted investment and supports for each student, ensuring that funds are allocated appropriately and efficiently.

A recent study of schools in the southern U.S. found that transitioning to a weighted student funding model led to noticeable gains in math and reading scores for English Learners and low-income students.²⁴ School principals attributed these academic improvements largely to increased budget flexibility, which enabled them to utilize innovative, targeted instructional approaches tailored toward their specific student populations.

Transparency

Weighted student funding models also offer simplicity and financial transparency, helping education stakeholders and the general public understand how state resources are allocated. North Carolina's current allotment system, on the other hand, is fairly complex, with an allotment manual that totals over 150 pages. A clear and understandable weighted student funding formula could empower families and communities to more effectively advocate for the resources their students and local communities need.

Importantly, transparency also makes accountability possible, allowing policymakers and advocates to track whether the formula is working as intended and whether students are receiving the targeted resources necessary to achieve academic growth. Furthermore, a transparent structure provides clarity around funding effort by state and local governments, as funding adjustments simply require changes to the base amount or weight percentages. Complex allotment systems, on the other hand, can obscure funding cuts or increases in ways that are challenging for the public to understand.

Flexibility

Under weighted student funding models, local districts are typically afforded significant flexibility to tailor education spending to their specific local needs and context. Student-based formulas are built to be responsive to the changing needs in a district. If a district experiences growth in its population of multilingual learners, their funding levels would automatically scale to meet the need.

CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING IN WEIGHTED STUDENT FUNDING SYSTEMS

In North Carolina, charter schools currently receive the average per pupil allocation for their average daily membership from the local district in which the charter school is located. Then, the school receives an additional amount from the state for students with disabilities and multilingual learners.

Under a weighted student funding formula, charter school students are typically funded identically to students in district public schools. Due to their structure, however, charter schools are usually ineligible for community weights, such as concentrated poverty or rurality weights. Some states opt to provide an additional direct allocation for charter schools on top of the generated per-pupil amounts to help cover facility costs if they are not funded through other revenue sources. Tennessee, for example, provides an additional \$500 per student for charter schools through a charter school direct allocation.



STUDY GROUP

The Forum’s Weighted Student Funding Study Group: Creating a Shared Foundation

Over the past two years, the Public School Forum of North Carolina brought together a representative study group to evaluate opportunities for strengthening the state’s school funding system and to assess the potential impact of transitioning to a weighted student funding model. Beginning in May 2024, the Forum brought together more than 100 education leaders, elected officials, and school finance experts, including 15 superintendents, local school board members, legislative representatives from both parties, the Department of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education, and statewide education associations and nonprofits (see Appendix B for a complete list of participating organizations and districts).

To support this effort, the Forum partnered with national school finance experts from Bellwether and EdTrust-Tennessee. Over two years of convenings, study group participants learned how weighted student funding models function in other states, analyzed the strengths and limitations of North Carolina’s current allotment system, and examined the potential impact of different weighted student funding formulas across districts and student populations. Participants joined the study group not necessarily to advocate for a shift to weighted student funding, but to provide expert feedback and establish consensus on key priorities should the state adopt a weighted student funding model.

Study group members engaged directly with our national partners, along with lawmakers and superintendents from Tennessee and Mississippi who had recently navigated transitions to weighted student funding in their own states. To guide future policy discussions in North Carolina, participants collaboratively developed a problem statement, an opportunity statement, and a core set of guiding principles to serve as a framework for evaluating various weighted student model prototypes.

Study Group Timeline

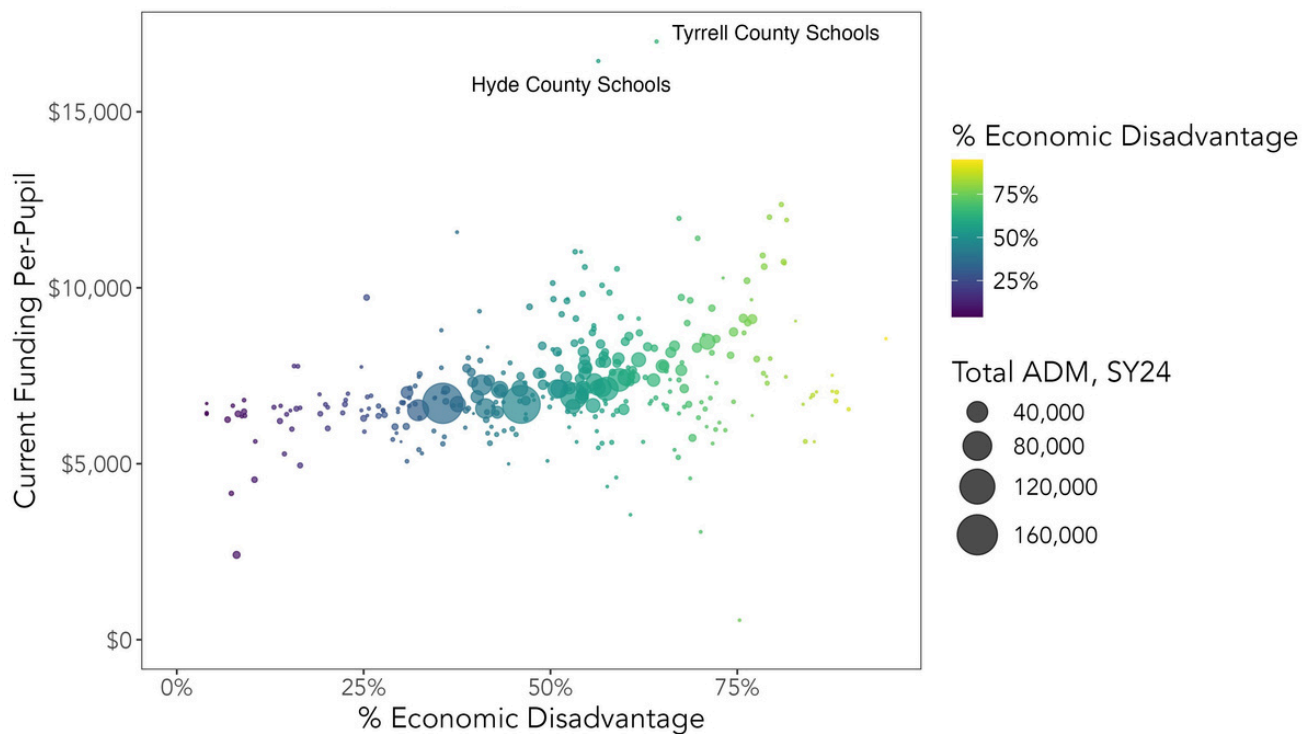


IDENTIFYING THE LIMITATIONS IN NORTH CAROLINA'S CURRENT FUNDING MODEL

Study group members noted that North Carolina's current school funding model relies on complex allotments and formulas that can take district leaders years to fully understand. Participants largely agreed that the present structure fails to meet the needs of students, schools, and districts statewide, citing challenges with insufficient overall funding, restrictions on local flexibility, and inequitable distribution of funds across districts and allotment categories.

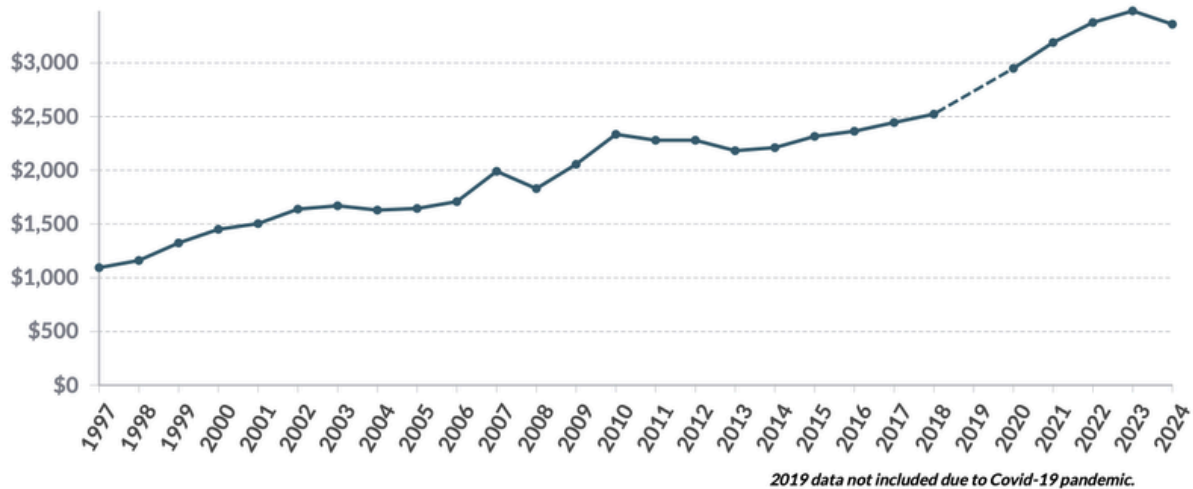
Analysis shows, for instance, that North Carolina's current funding system produces only a weak correlation between state expenditures relative to economically disadvantaged student populations.

North Carolina's Current Funding Model: State Funding per Student by Economically Disadvantaged Percentage in Districts and Charter Schools



Studies have identified structural challenges with North Carolina's current system that contribute to growing inequities between districts.²⁵ One of the clearest trends is the widening resource gap between wealthier counties and lower-wealth communities. Because local governments have taken on an increasingly significant role in funding schools, counties with stronger tax bases are better positioned to supplement state funding for operational expenses, using local resources to help attract well-qualified staff and provide additional educational opportunities to students.

Education spending gap between top and bottom 10 counties widens.



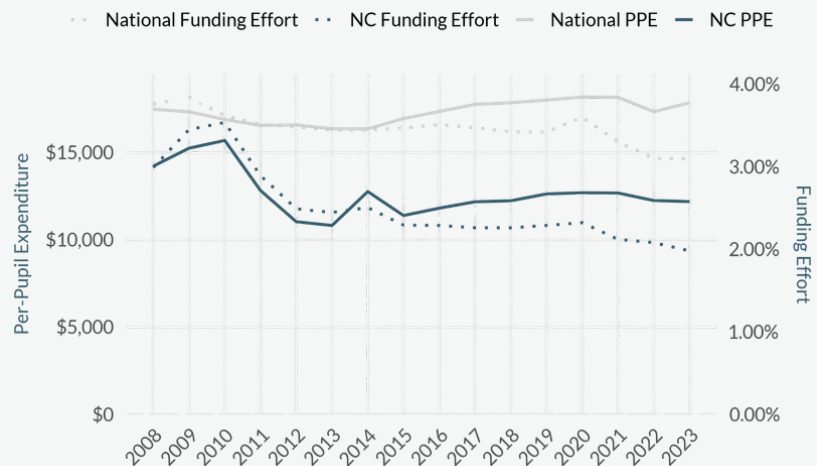
Meanwhile, lower-wealth counties often tax themselves at higher rates than wealthier counties while still generating substantially less revenue. In 2024-25, the ten poorest districts in North Carolina taxed themselves at 1.8 times the average tax rate of the ten wealthiest districts.²⁶ Yet despite that greater taxing effort, lower-wealth communities continue to operate with fewer resources.

North Carolina currently ranks 50th nationally in per-pupil funding, spending \$5,660 below the national average of \$17,853 per student.²⁷ Our state ranks last in the nation in funding effort, or the share of the state's gross domestic product that is allocated to PK-12 education. Based on 2023 data, if North Carolina had invested in public schools at the national average funding effort rate (3.10% of GDP), the state would have spent an additional \$6,270 per student.²⁸

In 2010, North Carolina's education level of funding effort was much closer to the national average. Like many states, North Carolina reduced state education spending following the Great Recession, and federal stimulus dollars helped to bridge the gap. But while many other states eventually restored or increased their investment in public schools, North Carolina did not keep up. Instead, the state's funding effort has steadily declined over time, reaching its lowest level in the 2023-24 school year.²⁹

Today, the average public school student nationally benefits from nearly 50% more education funding than a student in North Carolina, resulting in significant implications for educational opportunity, social mobility, workforce development, and the state's long-term economic competitiveness.

NC Lags Behind Nation in Both Funding Effort and Per-Pupil Expenditures



Data Source: Education Law Center, *Making the Grade*

Under current state law, strict restrictions on how districts spend or transfer specific allotment funds compound financial strain for local public schools. These restrictions impact the ability for district leaders to make decisions or allocate funding based on local context or the needs of the students in their communities. For example, the Teacher Assistant (TAs) allotment provides funding to hire TAs based on K-3 membership and restricts that funding for salaries and benefits for instructional teaching assistants. If a district has identified a need for additional interventionists, guidance counselors, or an additional teacher to reduce class size, they are unable to use those funds for those purposes, even if it better addresses the needs of their students. While the state previously afforded districts greater flexibility, legislative changes over the past decade have significantly restricted that flexibility for numerous allotments.³⁰

Study Group participants also noted that funding caps and unfunded state mandates often lead to additional strain on local school district budgets. For example, allotments for exceptional children are capped at 13% of district ADM, meaning that if the actual population of students with disability exceeds 13%, the district must fund services for those students without state support. Additionally, statutory K-3 class size mandate requires smaller class sizes without providing additional funding for the staffing, resources and facilities needed for implementation.

DEFINING THE PROBLEM AND OPPORTUNITY STATEMENTS

While these challenges drive calls for funding reform, the study group agreed that it was equally important to envision the possibilities of a modernized system. To establish a clear, collective vision, the study group developed an opportunity statement alongside its problem statement to frame what stakeholders hoped to achieve in a revised state funding model.

Problem Statement:

North Carolina's current school funding formula is antiquated, complex, and restrictive, which inhibits local control and limits the ability of school and district leaders to implement innovative learning strategies. The current formula does not provide adequate resources and structures needed to ensure all students have the opportunity to be successful in school and life.

Opportunity Statement:

North Carolina needs a new, modern, fully-funded school finance system that is transparent, accountable, predictable, student-centered, and responsive – one that empowers local educators to implement innovative learning strategies, addresses the differentiated needs of students and communities, and provides every student with the resources necessary for lifelong success.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The study group also established a set of principles to guide the development of model prototypes and evaluate any proposed weighted student formulas in North Carolina. These principles served as a north star for the group when assessing different weights, investment levels, and district impact across models.



Robust: The model ensures adequate and robust funding to provide the academic and non-academic supports needed for all children to achieve excellence, including having access to high-quality, effective educators and support personnel and incentivizing college and career pathways for all public school units.



Supportive: The model provides tailored supports based on each student's unique needs; with additional/differentiated funding for students based on economic disadvantage, disability status, multilingual learner status, and other unique needs and for districts in sparsely populated areas and with high concentration of poverty. All policy mandates from the state (eg. class size requirements) should be fully funded to ensure student needs are met.



Transparent: The model is clear and easy to understand for parents/caregivers, community members, and district/school staff. Data on funding levels, including base amounts and weights should be reported publicly.



Predictable/Stable: The model is predictable year to year so districts can plan for future funding easily to ensure student needs are met.



Responsible: The State Board of Education establishes and maintains comprehensive plans for implementation, monitoring, data collection/reporting, and continuous improvement to ensure funds are addressing student needs as intended.



Flexible: The model provides adequate flexibility to enable local leaders to be responsive to the unique needs of students and the community.

NON-NEGOTIABLES

In addition to guiding principles, the study group developed a set of non-negotiable elements that would be required in order to support a revised school funding model.



No Districts Should Lose Funding: Sustained, increased investment for North Carolina's schools is needed to ensure that no districts lose funding that could compromise their ability to meet students' needs.



Evaluation for Change: Base amounts should be reviewed annually and increased, at a minimum, to keep pace with inflation, mandated salary and benefit increases, and emerging needs. The State Board of Education should conduct an inclusive, comprehensive, and regular evaluation of the model every two years to address the adequacy of funding levels and the extent to which funds are addressing the needs of student subgroups. The Assessment should involve gathering stakeholder input, including public comment. Any recommendations emerging from the Assessment should be delivered to the General Assembly prior to the start of the long legislative session in odd-numbered years. In addition to the model Assessment, the state should share detailed and user-friendly public data about district funding.



Implementation Support: During at least the first two years of model implementation, DPI should provide comprehensive training for district, county, and school-based leaders and staff using a change management plan for the whole community. The change management plan should go beyond compliance and incorporate innovation to encourage flexibility in local districts. Any transition process will require allocation of state funds and resources to DPI to support implementation, research, and innovation at the district level.

These shared foundations guided the development of model prototypes and served as the basis for our discussions, evaluations, and recommendations. Throughout the remainder of 2025 and early 2026, the study group explored various weighted student funding models, considering weight options and values, base amounts, total state investment, and fiscal impact in districts across the state.



EXPLORING WEIGHTED STUDENT FUNDING IN NORTH CAROLINA

The study group explored multiple weighted student funding model prototypes to understand how weights and base amounts would impact funding levels and distribution across school districts and student subgroups. We present four of those models in this report, each of which uses the same foundational weight categories and percentages agreed upon by the study group, but different total investment levels via a change in the base. By holding weights constant, the four models demonstrate the impact of increased investment in the models on districts and individual student weight categories.

Because North Carolina state statute establishes that the primary responsibility for funding operating costs for a free and uniform system of public schools lies with the state government, the models in this report focus on state education funding. Local and federal funding sit outside of the model prototypes and are assumed to remain constant. All models use North Carolina student and allotment data from the 2024-25 school year. Appendix C provides more in-depth information on the data and methodology used in this study.

EXAMINING WEIGHTS

Throughout the study group process, stakeholders explored various weight categories and values to better understand how these decisions affect total investment and impact on districts across the state. During initial stages, the group prioritized the most important weight categories to prioritize utilizing a worksheet presented in Appendix B. The following weight categories and values reflect meaningful consensus among study group members about necessary priorities and investment level. **However, the weight structure presented in this report is a scenario used for modeling purposes and not a final recommendation from this group.**

The table to the right shows the weights and values used across all four models presented in this report. Each weight represents a multiplier to the base for students or districts that qualify. For example, students who are identified as economically disadvantaged would receive the base amount plus an additional 40% of the base amount. Weights are also additive, meaning students who qualify across multiple categories receive the weighted amount for each category added on top of the base amount.

Scenario Weighted Student Funding Weights for Models 1-4

Economically Disadvantaged	40%
Students with Disabilities	110-150%
Multilingual Learners	17.5%
Academically/Intellectually Gifted	5%
Career and Technical Education	16.1%
Sparsity	Up to 25%
Concentrated Poverty	5%

Economically Disadvantaged Student Weight

Under this scenario, students who are identified as economically disadvantaged receive an additional 40% weight. The study group shared strong consensus that North Carolina should invest more heavily in economically disadvantaged students.

Using 2024-25 data, **over 271,000 (20%) of North Carolina’s public school students would qualify for this weight.** Under this scenario, the model uses the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) produced by the U.S. Census Bureau to identify economically disadvantaged students.

This is an adjustment from current economically disadvantaged measurements in North Carolina, which are based on Federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) figures. Nationally, there is movement away from FRPL data which has become less reliable due to community eligibility and recent changes to Medicaid and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). While this report uses single-year SAIPE data, the data can be volatile year to year due to Census sampling methods; as a result, the Forum would recommend using a 2-3 year average to mitigate large shifts.

There is substantial research demonstrating the positive impact of targeted and increased funding for low-income students on academic outcomes.³¹ For example, two meta-analyses compared the results of 53 studies in total, finding that spending targeted toward low-income students led to stronger gains in student outcomes (including test scores, graduation rates, and college attendance) than for higher income students. One multi-state study found that a 20% increase in funding for low-income students increased educational attainment by a full year.³² Other research has shown long-term impacts, including crime rate reductions for lower-income students.³³

Students with Disabilities Weight

In the presented models, weights for students with disabilities function through tiers as follows: Tier 1 receives 110%, Tier 2 receives 130%, and Tier 3 receives 150% of the base. Tiers are determined based on services required to meet student needs, with Tier 3 requiring the most services. Under this scenario and due to the data available to the study group, the tiers in this analysis are based on student diagnosis (see Appendix C for more information). However, the study group shared consensus that the tiers should be based on service hours rather than diagnosis, which would better reflect unique student needs and the associated cost to the school district.

Based on 2024-25 data, **nearly 200,000 (15%) of North Carolina's public school students would qualify for this weight.** Current law limits Exceptional Children funding to the equivalent of 13% of district enrollment, even though 93% of North Carolina school districts exceed that cap by the end of year.³⁴ Our modeling removes this cap, ensuring that every student who qualifies receives the additional support they need. Recent proposals in North Carolina have aimed to adopt a weighted funding formula specifically for students with disabilities, including a recommendation from NCDPI that would remove the funding cap and distribute funds based on student need.³⁵

Multilingual Learners Weight

Students identified as Multilingual Learners (ML) would qualify for a 17.5% weight under our model prototypes. Based on 2024-25 data, **nearly 170,000 (12%) of North Carolina's public school students would qualify for this weight.** While not reflected in this analysis, beginning in the 2025-26 school year, the state changed ML identification criteria, which led to a decrease in the total ML population of about 15,000 students.³⁶

Research has shown that multilingual learners need more resources and support for academic success due to the increased demand of simultaneously learning a new language and the standard curriculum.³⁷ A number of data-driven interventions have produced positive results, such as bilingual instructional models, multilingual materials, tutoring, parental supports, and professional development for teachers. All of these practices require additional funding that targets this population of students.

Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Weight

Students identified as Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) would qualify for a 5% weight in the presented model scenarios. This weight would apply to 5% of the total ADM in each district. This figure uses a census-based assumption of 5% participation in gifted programs across districts, rather than formal identification of students in a specific program. Using 2024-25 data, **over 68,000 (5%) of North Carolina's public school students would qualify for this weight.**

The rationale for this decision is that wealthier and white students are more likely to have access to gifted and talented testing and programming within their school, which could lead to disproportionate identification and distribution of funding.³⁸ States that have adopted weighted student funding have used a similar measure (for more information, see the comparison table in Appendix A). The presented models include a slight increase in the AIG allocation compared to the current formula, which caps funding at 4% of the student population in a district.³⁹

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Weight

Students enrolled in grades 8-12 would receive an additional 16.1% to support Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in the model scenarios. Based on 2024-25 data, **over 547,000 (40%) of North Carolina's public school students would qualify for this weight.**

North Carolina currently funds CTE at a nationally high level, with proven success in driving long-term benefits. In the 2024-25 school year, over 550,000 students enrolled in a CTE course in North Carolina, the third largest in the nation.⁴⁰ In that same year, nearly 400,000 North Carolina students earned industry-recognized credentials, the largest in state history and the second highest in the nation.⁴¹ High-quality CTE programs can include dual-enrollment, worksite education, and credentialing opportunities. These programs have long-term economic benefits including higher wages and long-term earnings.⁴² Communities and businesses also benefit from CTE programs through reduction in training costs and increasing the economic-well being in the community.⁴³

Sparsity Weight

In the presented models, traditional public school districts that have fewer than 12 students per square mile would qualify for a sparsity weight of up to 25% for each student. This is an escalating weight, meaning that the weight value increases as the number of students per square mile decreases. Using 2024-25 data, **48 (42%) of North Carolina's traditional public school districts (serving nearly 150,000, or 11%, of public school students) would qualify for this weight.**

This weight category represents a shift from the current Small County Supplemental Funding (SCSF). While both this sparsity weight and the SCSF allotment are intended to support rural districts and the associated increased costs they bear, they allocate money using different metrics (students per square mile compared to total ADM respectively). Importantly, in North Carolina, all districts that are currently eligible for the SCSF are within rural counties, but not all rural school districts qualify for SCSF. Under this model, an additional 18 districts would receive funding that targets the additional costs of educating students in a geographically sparse area.

School districts with sparse student populations face additional challenges that require increased investment. These districts have higher per-pupil overhead costs, higher school transportation costs, and recruitment/retention challenges with staffing.⁴⁴ Additionally, the Forum's Local School Finance Study shows that many rural districts have a smaller local tax base, higher property tax rates, and generate less revenue to support their public schools.⁴⁵

Concentrated Poverty Weight

Traditional public school districts with more than 25%-35% of students identified as economically disadvantaged would receive an additional weight of up to 5% for each student under these models. As with the Economically Disadvantaged weight, students are identified based on SAIPE. The concentrated poverty weight in these models is an escalating weight, meaning that the weight gradually increases as the percentage of identified students in the district increases. While districts become eligible for this additional funding at 40%, districts with at least 80% of students identified through SAIPE qualify for the max weight of 5% in this model. Using 2024-25 data, **11 (10%) of North Carolina's traditional public school districts (serving over 42,000, or 3%, of public school students) would qualify for this weight.**

Districts with higher rates of poverty require significantly more resources to support student achievement. A recent study revealed that reaching national average student outcome goals in high-poverty districts (where poverty exceeds 40%) costs more than three times as much per pupil as in low-poverty districts.⁴⁶ Additionally, teacher turnover rates are 50% higher in high-poverty schools, a gap that jumps to 70% for math and science educators.⁴⁷

Additional Model Considerations

Study group members also identified several school functions that would be better addressed outside of the standard weighted student funding structure. The group generally agreed that transportation and dual enrollment should remain as direct categorical allotments, rather than being rolled into the formula (see Appendix C for a complete list of current allotments included in our modeling). Thus, these two allotments are not included in the presented models and associated funding would be in addition and should be held constant based on current levels.

For dual enrollment in particular, there was strong consensus among study group participants that the current dual enrollment **funding structure should be maintained due to widespread success, especially for rural and at-risk students.**

Additionally, **the model scenarios do not adjust the current low-wealth funding formula in North Carolina.** The current low-wealth funding amounts are, however, included in the total cost projections, outside of the weighted student formula. The study group agreed that the low-wealth formula requires further examination alongside a potential revision to North Carolina's school funding formula, but that this fell outside of the scope of their work.

MODELING THE IMPACT

Using the weights described, the following four models demonstrate the potential impact on total per-pupil expenditures across districts with different base and total investment levels.

Model 1

Revenue-Neutral

Total Investment: +\$733K

Avg. State Investment:
\$7,212 per pupil

Base: \$5,133

42/115 Districts Gain
101/212 Charters Gain

Model 2

Increased Base

Total Investment: +\$1.4B

Avg. State Investment:
\$8,109 per pupil

Base: \$5,800

93/115 Districts Gain
176/212 Charters Gain

Model 3

Adequacy

Total Investment: +\$4.1B

Avg. State Investment:
\$9,891 per pupil

Base: \$7,125

112/115 Districts Gain
207/212 Charters Gain

Model 4

National Average Funding Effort

Total Investment: +\$8.8B

Avg. State Investment:
\$13,017 per pupil

Base: \$9,450

115/115 Districts Gain
212/212 Charters Gain

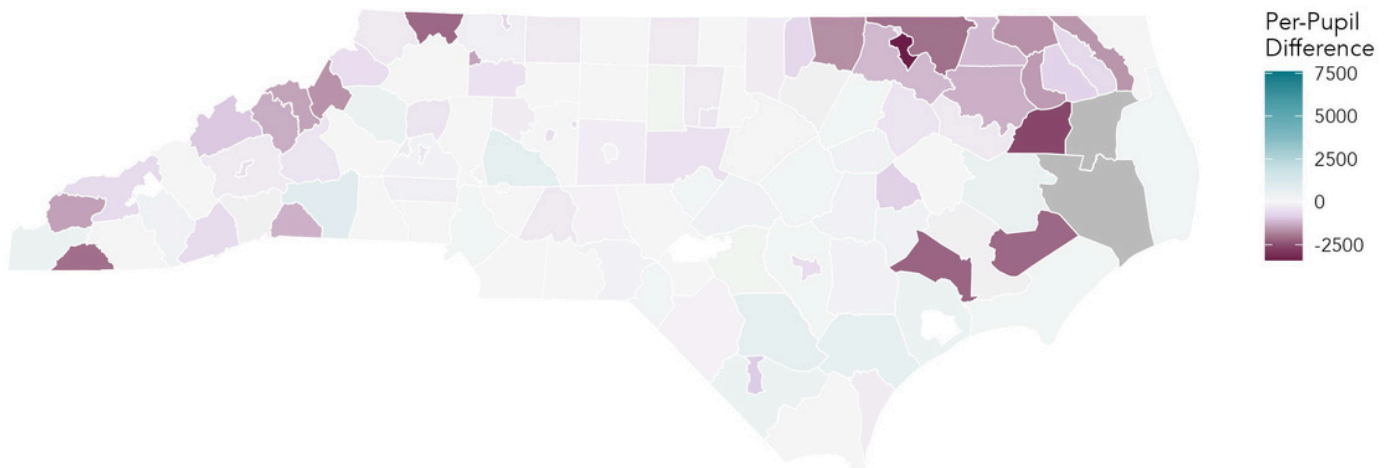
MODEL 1: REVENUE NEUTRAL MODEL WITH NO NEW INVESTMENT

Model 1 establishes a base amount of \$5,133 per student, representing a revenue neutral transition to a weighted student funding model based on current state education spending and assuming no additional investment.⁴⁸ **Under this model, only 42 (37%) traditional school districts would gain funding, while the majority (73 in total or 63%) would lose funding. This model would also lead to a loss of funding in the majority of charter schools, with 101 (48%) gaining and 111 (52%) losing.**

Per-pupil funding differences compared to current spending ranges from a loss of -\$7,219 to a gain of +\$945 with only 5 districts (4%) seeing increases of more than \$500 per student (see Appendix D for a complete list of funding change by district). The cost to make up the difference for districts and charter schools that lose funding, also known as a hold harmless cost, would total over \$192.4 million.

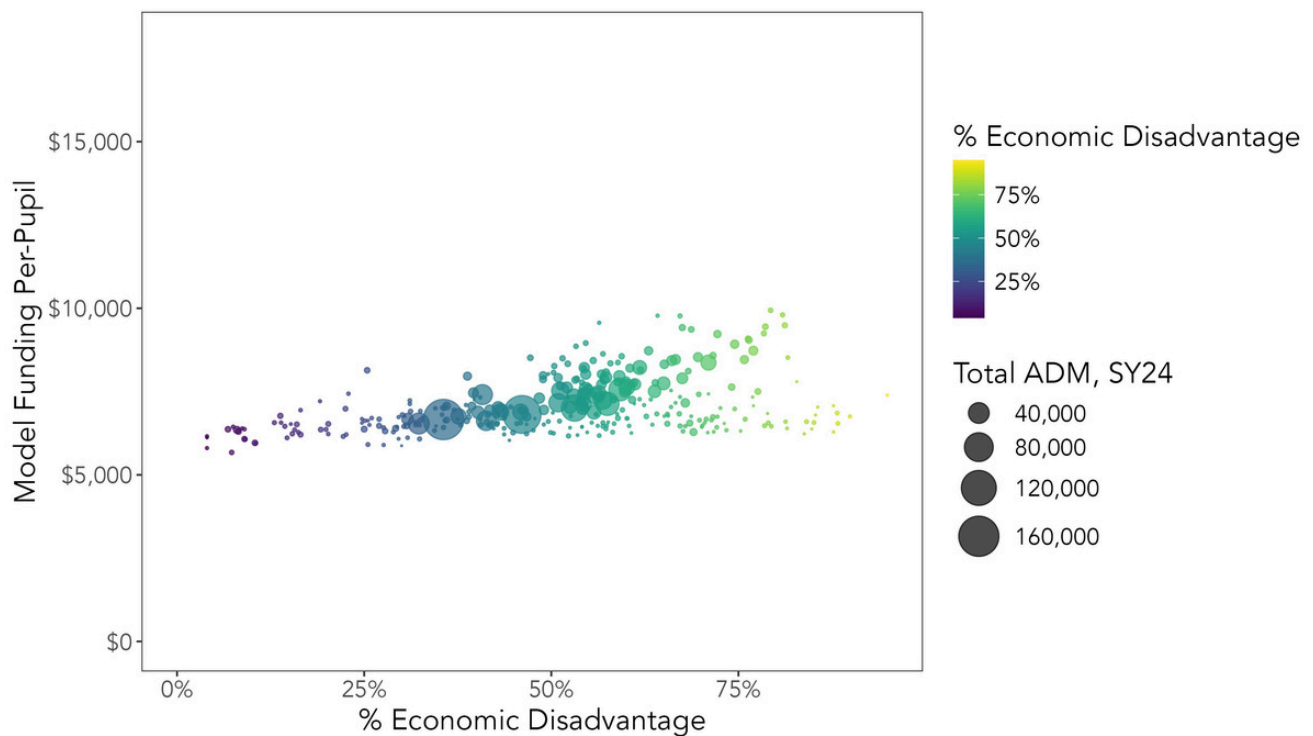
Component	FY24 Current System	FY24 WSF Amount	FY24 Difference
Base	\$7.2B	\$7.8B	+\$578M
Charters	\$975M	N/A: Funding via WSF	—
Low-Income (Individual Student + Concentrated Pov.)	\$97M (DSSF) \$343M (At-Risk)	\$626M	+\$186M
English Learners	\$132M	\$161M	+\$29M
Sparsity	\$52M	\$75M	+\$23M
Special Education	\$1.02B	\$1.3B	+\$286M
CTE	\$553M	\$490M	-\$63M
AIG	\$82M	\$19M	-\$63M
Low-Wealth	\$471M	\$471M	\$0
Total	\$10.8B	\$10.9B	+\$733K

Model 1 vs Current Funding Total Per-Pupil Difference



Tyrrell and Hyde Counties (in gray) are outliers in the model with significant losses per student due to their very small student populations. Exact per-pupil differences are listed in Appendix D.

Model 1: State Funding per Student by Economically Disadvantaged Percentage in Districts and Charter Schools



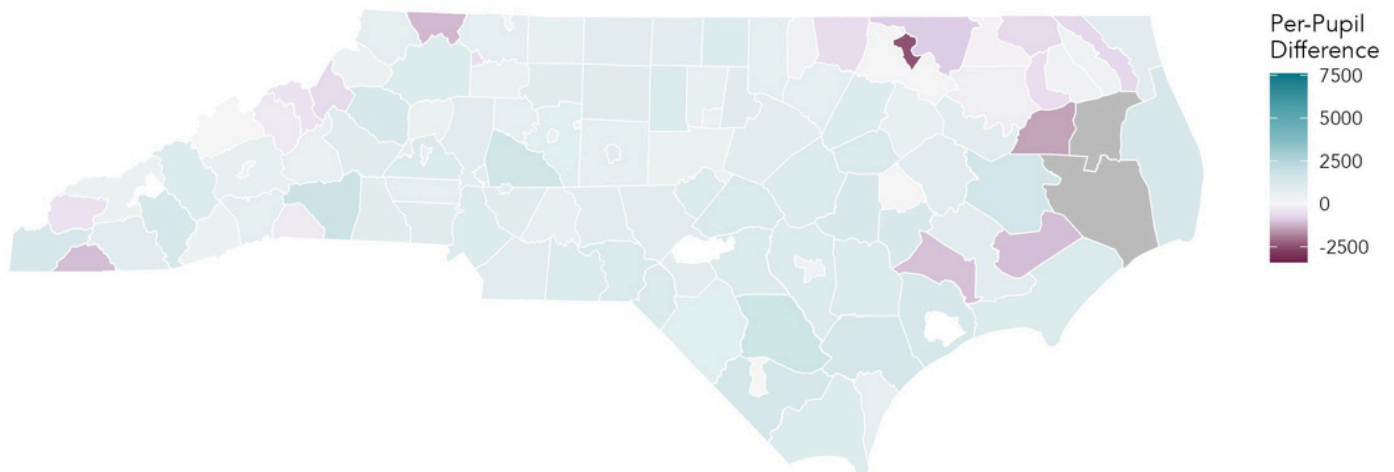
MODEL 2: INCREASED BASE MODEL WITH A \$1.4 BILLION INVESTMENT

Model 2 establishes a base amount of \$5,800 per student with a total annual additional investment of \$1.4 billion. This model represents a slightly increased base amount relative to the revenue-neutral model and is more closely aligned with Tennessee's total level of additional investment during their initial transition to a weighted student funding system. **Under this model, 93 (81%) traditional school districts and 176 (83%) charter schools would gain funding, while 22 (19%) districts and 36 (17%) charter schools would lose funding in the transition.**

Per-pupil funding differences relative to current funding levels range from a loss of -\$6,094 to a gain of +\$1,842 with 76 districts (66%) increasing by more than \$500 per student (see Appendix D for a complete list of funding change by district). A hold harmless cost for the districts and charter schools that would lose funding would total over \$39 million.

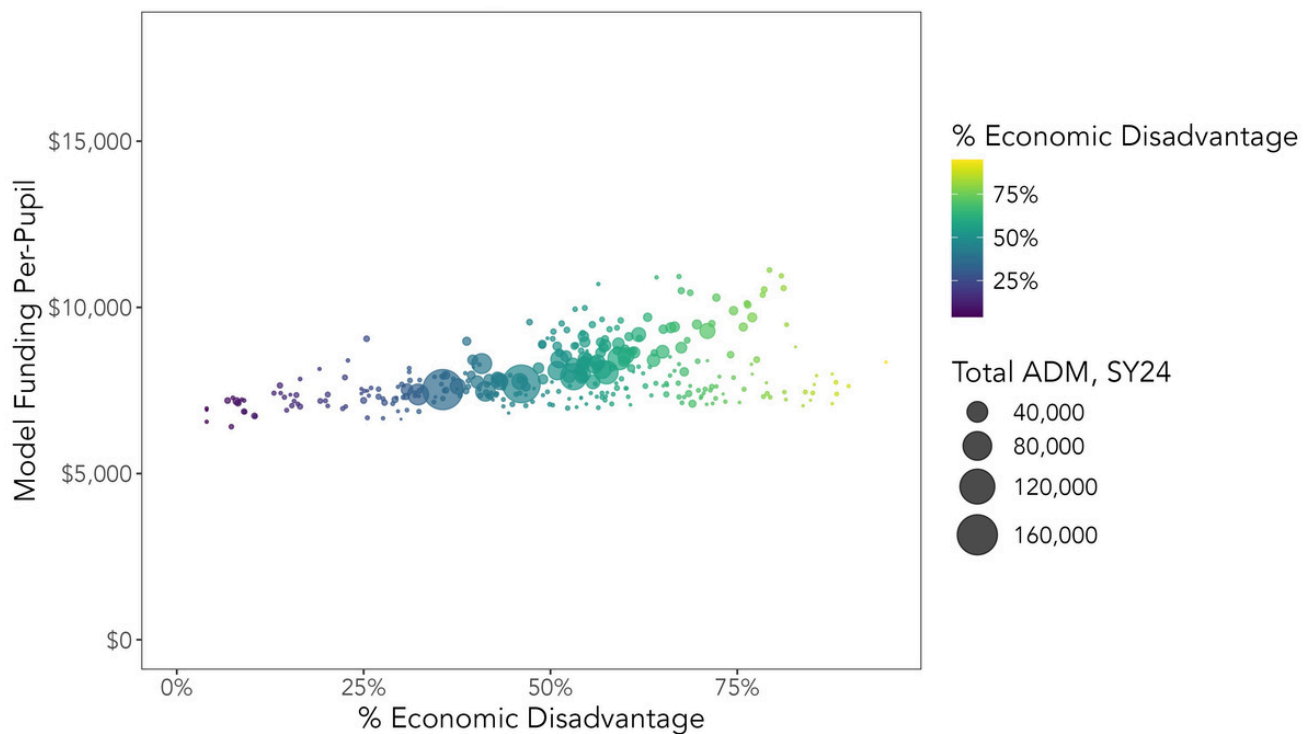
Component	FY24 Current System	FY24 WSF Amount	FY24 Difference
Base	\$7.2B	\$8.8B	+\$1.6B
Charters	\$975M	N/A: Funding via WSF	—
Low-Income (Individual Student + Concentrated Pov.)	\$97M (DSSF) \$343M (At-Risk)	\$708M	+\$267M
English Learners	\$132M	\$182M	+\$49M
Sparsity	\$52M	\$84M	+\$33M
Special Education	\$1.02B	\$1.5B	+\$456M
CTE	\$553M	\$553M	+\$333K
AIG	\$82M	\$22M	-\$61M
Low-Wealth	\$471M	\$471M	\$0
Total	\$10.8B	\$12.3B	+\$1.4B

Model 2 vs Current Funding Total Per-Pupil Difference



Tyrrell and Hyde Counties (in gray) are outliers in the model with significant losses per student due to their very small student populations. Exact per-pupil differences are listed in Appendix D.

Model 2: State Funding per Student by Economically Disadvantaged Percentage in Districts and Charter Schools



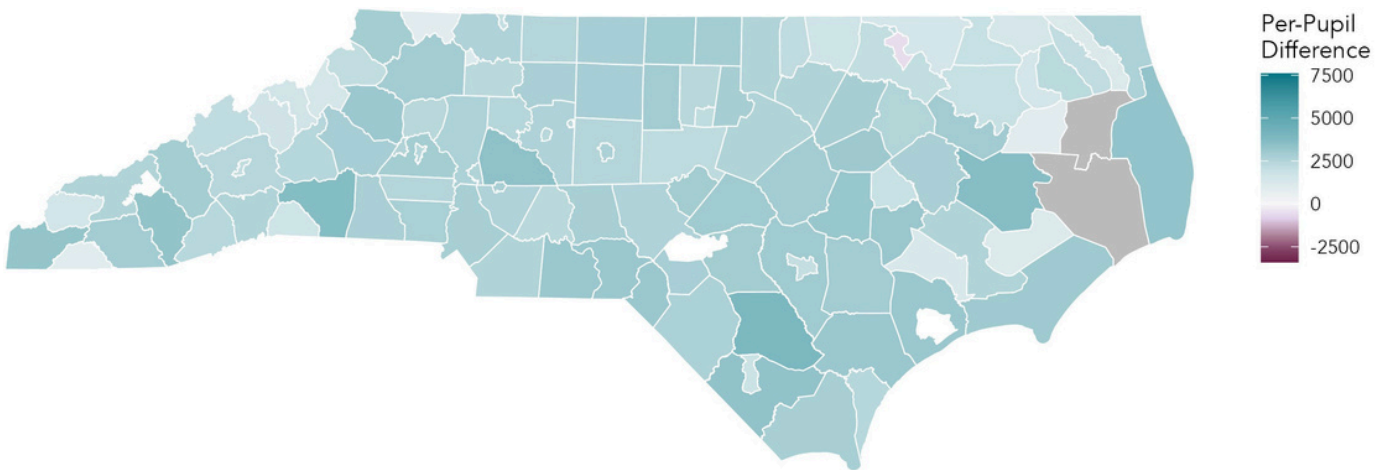
MODEL 3: ADEQUACY MODEL WITH A \$4.1 BILLION INVESTMENT

Model 3 establishes a base amount of \$7,125 per student with a total annual additional investment of \$4.1 billion. This model aligns with the total additional cost needed to meet the adequacy requirements for K-12 funding outlined in the Leandro Comprehensive Remedial Plan.⁴⁹ **Under this model, 112 (97%) traditional school districts and 207 (98%) charter schools would gain funding, while 3 (3%) districts with small student populations and 5 (2%) charter schools would lose funding in the transition.**

Per-pupil funding differences relative to current spending levels ranges from a loss of -\$3,861 to a gain of +\$3,869 with 109 districts (95%) increasing by more than \$1,000 per student (see Appendix D for a complete list of funding change by district). The hold harmless cost for the districts and charter schools that would lose funding would total \$6.8 million.

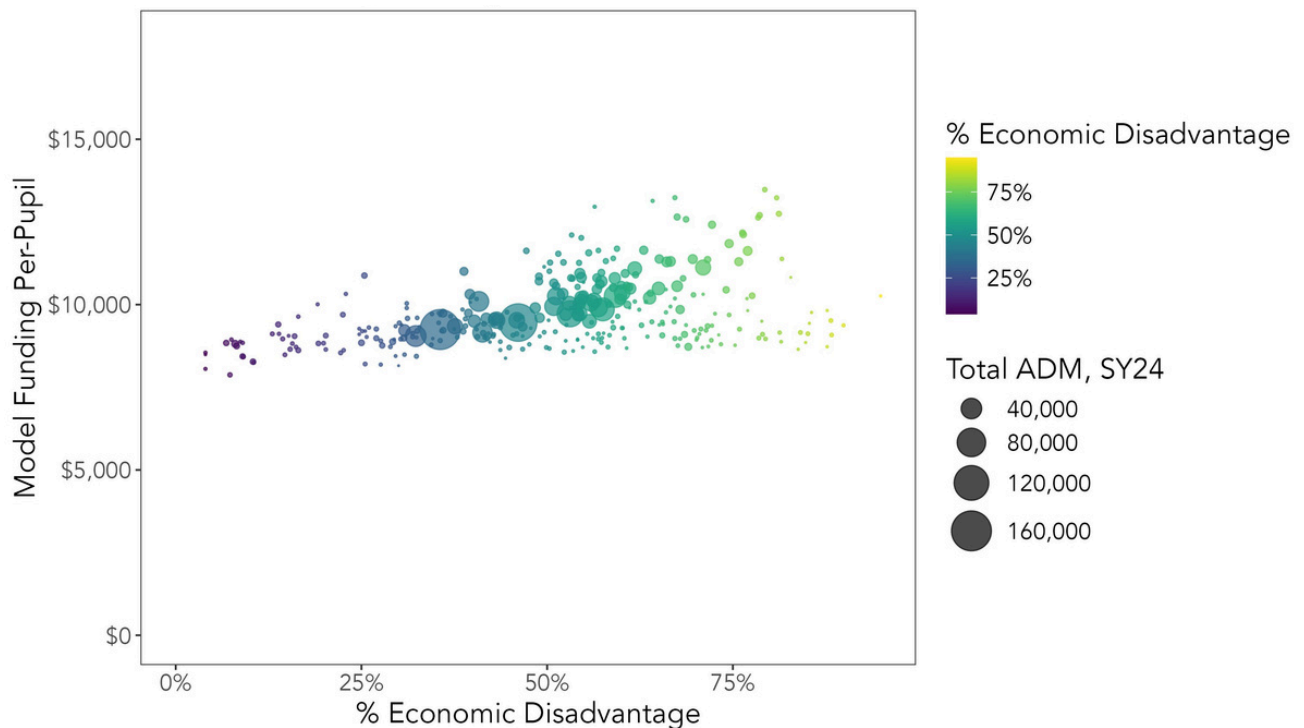
Component	FY24 Current System	FY24 WSF Amount	FY24 Difference
Base	\$7.2B	\$10.8B	+\$3.6B
Charters	\$975M	N/A: Funding via WSF	—
Low-Income (Individual Student + Concentrated Pov.)	\$97M (DSSF) \$343M (At-Risk)	\$869M	+\$429M
English Learners	\$132M	\$223M	+\$91M
Sparsity	\$52M	\$104M	+\$52M
Special Education	\$1.02B	\$1.8B	+\$794M
CTE	\$553M	\$680M	+\$126M
AIG	\$82M	\$27M	-\$55M
Low-Wealth	\$471M	\$471M	\$0
Total	\$10.8B	\$15B	+\$4.1B

Model 3 vs Current Funding Total Per-Pupil Difference



Tyrrell and Hyde Counties (in gray) are outliers in the model with significant losses per student due to their very small student populations. Exact per-pupil differences are listed in Appendix D.

Model 3: State Funding per Student by Economically Disadvantaged Percentage in Districts and Charter Schools



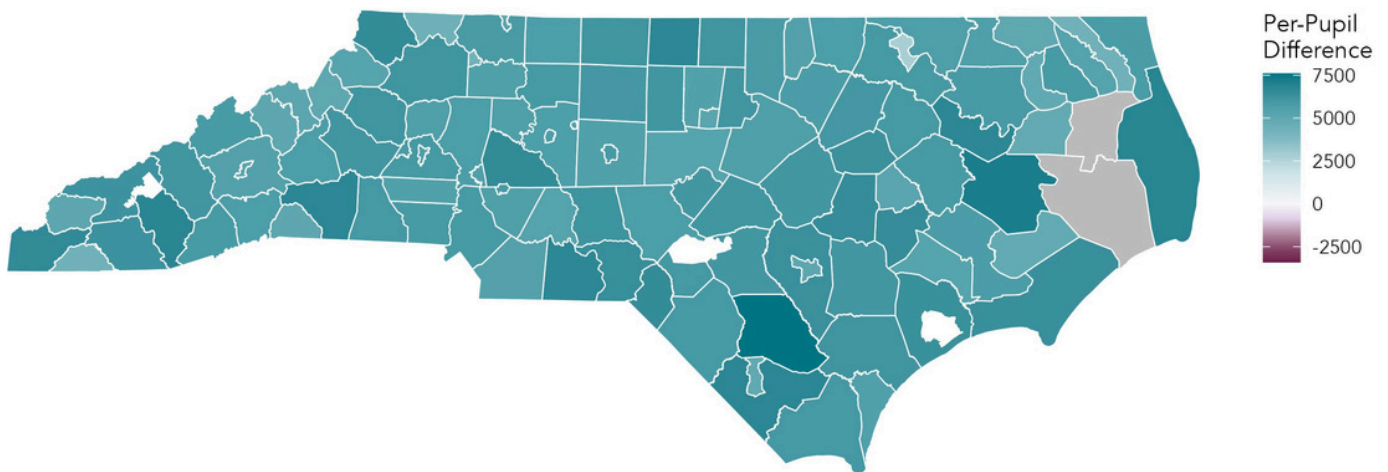
MODEL 4: NATIONAL AVERAGE FUNDING EFFORT MODEL WITH AN \$8.8 BILLION INVESTMENT

Model 4 establishes a base amount of \$9,450 per student with a total annual additional investment of \$8.8 billion. The investment in Model 4 represents the total cost needed for North Carolina to reach the national average funding effort of 3.1%, which measures local and state funding allocated to support public education as a percentage of the state's economic activity.⁵⁰ **Under this model, all 115 traditional school districts and all 212 charter schools would gain funding.**

Per-pupil differences relative to current spending levels range from a gain of +\$59 to +\$7,592 with 113 districts (98%) increasing by more than \$2,500 per student (see Appendix D for a complete list of funding change by district). With all districts and charters gaining funding, Model 4 has a hold harmless cost of \$0.

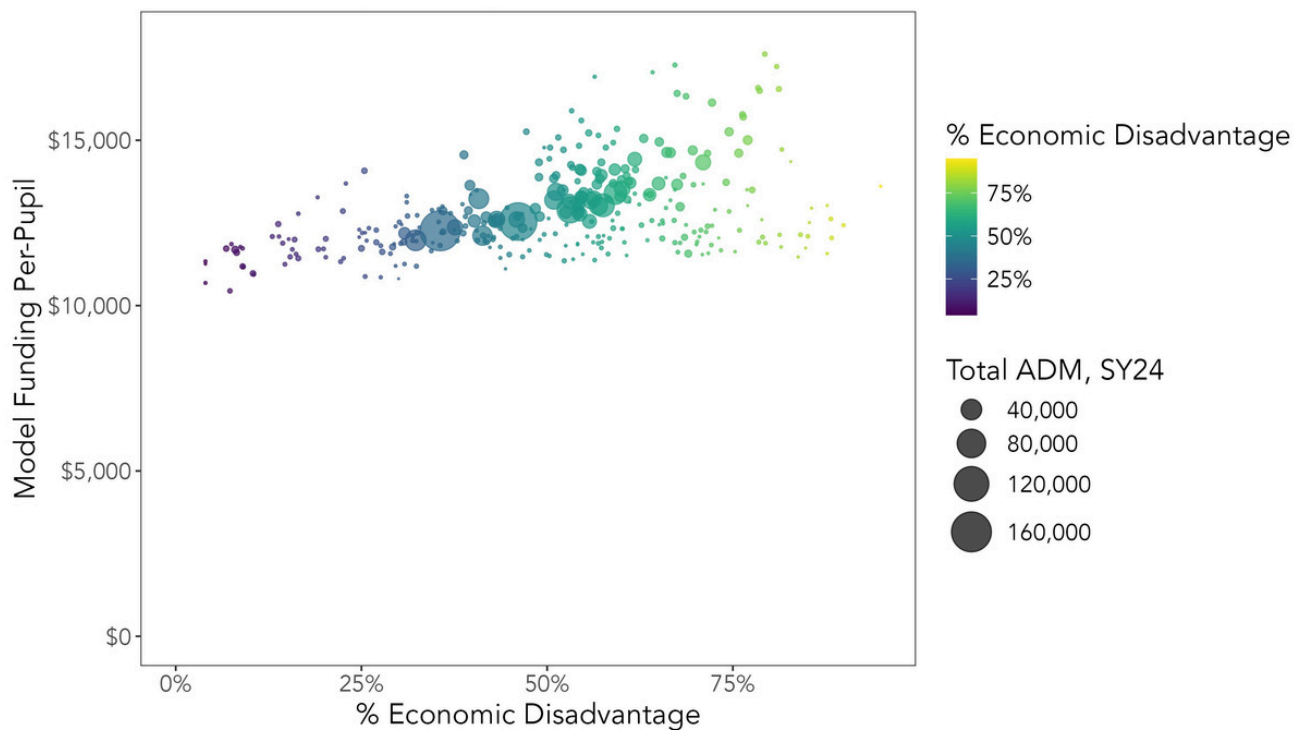
Component	FY24 Current System	FY24 WSF Amount	FY24 Difference
Base	\$7.2B	\$14.3B	+\$7.1B
Charters	\$975M	N/A: Funding via WSF	—
Low-Income (Individual Student + Concentrated Pov.)	\$97M (DSSF) \$343M (At-Risk)	\$1.2B	+\$713M
English Learners	\$132M	\$296M	+\$164M
Sparsity	\$52M	\$138M	+\$86M
Special Education	\$1.02B	\$2.4B	+\$1.4B
CTE	\$553M	\$902M	+\$349M
AIG	\$82M	\$36M	-\$47M
Low-Wealth	\$471M	\$471M	\$0
Total	\$10.8B	\$19.7B	+\$8.8B

Model 4 vs Current Funding Total Per-Pupil Difference



Tyrrell and Hyde Counties (in gray) are outliers in the model with significant losses per student due to their very small student populations. Exact per-pupil differences are listed in Appendix D.

Model 4: State Funding per Student by Economically Disadvantaged Percentage in Districts and Charter Schools



FINDINGS

Through the scenario model comparisons, the study group identified a number of key takeaways that provide important context for any potential transition to a weighted student funding model in North Carolina.

Higher-investment models would offer greater equity and opportunity for district innovation. By investing more funding per student, models three and four would give the vast majority of school districts the resources and flexibility needed to better meet the unique needs of their students. With adequate funding, districts could strengthen support for students with greater needs while also pursuing innovative strategies tailored to their local communities, all with funding that is more transparent, predictable, and flexible.

Redistributing existing funding without increasing overall investment would result in significant per-student funding losses for most traditional public school districts and charter schools. Transitioning to a new formula would require additional investment to ensure that traditional school districts and charter schools across the state are able to benefit from funding reform.

Each of the four model prototypes would result in a more equitable distribution of resources for students with greater need, including students in poverty, students with disabilities, and multilingual learners. A weighted student funding model could provide the opportunity to more clearly direct funding where it is most needed. Of course, the impact would depend on which weights are included and the size of the weight.

The state's smallest districts would experience more significant losses under multiple weighted funding scenarios. Tyrrell and Hyde county school districts are consistent outliers in the dataset and modeling due to their extremely small student population (433 and 434 respectively) and current state per-pupil funding (\$16,997 and \$16,442 respectively). It is unlikely that a transition to a weighted student funding formula will be able to account for the unique context of these districts. The study group had strong consensus that there would need to be a permanent hold harmless or special allocation for these two districts under most model scenarios to prevent major funding loss.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The models presented to the study group demonstrated a spectrum of design approaches, enabling participants to consider key tradeoffs between simplicity, district impact, and overall fiscal implications. Transitioning to a weighted student funding model offers North Carolina an opportunity to improve resource adequacy and equity across its public schools. However, achieving these benefits and avoiding harmful consequences depends on formula design, base funding levels, weight percentages, and total new investment from the state.

While the study group is not endorsing a specific weighted student funding formula at this time, we offer the following policy recommendations grounded in research, representative stakeholder input, and national best practices.



ALIGN ANY FORMULA WITH THE STUDY GROUP'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND NON-NEGOTIABLES

The study group's guiding principles and non-negotiables should inform the design and evaluation of any future weighted student funding formula proposals for North Carolina. These frameworks represent consensus from a diverse and representative group of education leaders and experts across North Carolina. Together, they represent a foundation that any funding system in our state should reflect.

Study Group Rubric for Weighted Student Funding Proposals in North Carolina

Guiding Principles

Robust	Does the model provide adequate and robust funding to provide the academic and non-academic supports needed for all children to achieve excellence?
Supportive	Does the model provide tailored supports based on each student's unique needs?
Transparent	Is the model clear and easy to understand? Is there publicly available data on funding levels?
Predictable/Stable	Is the model predictable year to year so districts can plan for future funding easily?
Responsible	Does the State Board of Education maintain comprehensive plans for implementation monitoring, data collection, and continuous improvement?,
Flexible	Does the model provide adequate flexibility to enable local leaders to be responsible to the unique needs of students and the community?

Non-Negotiables

No Districts Lose Funding	Does the model ensure that no districts lose funding?
Evaluation for Change	Does the model include annual increases in the base to keep up with inflation and an inclusive, comprehensive, and regular evaluation?
Implementation Support	Is the model clear and easy to understand? Is there publicly available data on funding levels?



SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE INVESTMENTS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Inadequate state investment in public education remains a primary challenge for districts in meeting students' needs, and this must be addressed regardless of how funds are distributed. North Carolina continues to rank at the bottom nationally in both funding effort and per-pupil spending. If the state aims to drive long-term economic growth and remain a top destination for families and businesses, it must make substantial and intentional investments in its public school students.

As the modeling presented in this report clearly demonstrates, implementing a cost-neutral model would result in untenable funding losses for the majority of the state's school districts and charter schools. **Transitioning to a weighted student funding formula will require significant, sustained new state investment and a guarantee that no districts or charter schools will be harmed as a result of the transition.** This recommendation aligns with the study group's guiding principles of ensuring our finance model is robust and supportive.



TARGET INVESTMENTS TO THE STUDENTS AND COMMUNITIES WHO NEED IT MOST

The study group agreed on the importance of targeting investment to students and communities most in need, including low-income students, students with disabilities, multilingual learners, rural districts, and districts with low wealth. A shift to a weighted student model should reflect the actual needs and costs of effectively serving unique students and districts across the state through the specific weights used and the amounts of each weight. This recommendation aligns with the study group's guiding principles of supportive and transparent.



CONTINUOUSLY EVALUATE AND IMPROVE THE STATE'S SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA

Ensuring the state's funding model remains responsive to actual costs and student needs will require regular re-evaluation. Student populations, economic conditions, and revenue evolve continuously and regardless of the underlying structure, funding models should be flexible to adapt to predictable and unforeseen changes. Routine evaluation should be built directly into the policy along with statutory, scheduled adjustments to keep up with inflation.

Model evaluations should assess both how effectively the formula directs funding to intended student populations and how local districts are utilizing funds to address student needs. Clear reporting and evaluation is necessary to ensure that targeted funding is reaching the students who need it most and contributing to student success. Public reporting should include allocation, spending, and student outcomes broken down by subgroups.

Moreover, the state should ensure that district leaders are present at every step of the way and should continue input-gathering before, during, and after implementation. This recommendation aligns with the study group's guiding principles of flexible/sustainable and the non-negotiables of evaluation for change and implementation support.



IMPLEMENT LOW-COST ADJUSTMENTS TO THE CURRENT FORMULA IN THE SHORT-TERM

In the absence of a full-scale weighted student funding model that meets each of the study group's guiding principles, there are steps that lawmakers can take in the near-term to target support to the students who need it most without a complete overhaul of the funding formula.

Increasing flexibility and the ability to transfer funds between allotments would empower local district leaders to address the challenges specific to their communities. The state could provide this flexibility by combining the Disadvantaged Student Supplemental Funding and At-Risk Student Services into one allotment and all other dollar allotments into a single allotment with greater flexibility.

Additionally, DPI's proposed weighted Exceptional Children (EC) model would be an impactful first step, increasing support for high-needs students and tying funding more closely to need through service hours rather than diagnosis. Similar adjustments can be made to other allotments directed toward low-income students and multilingual learners.

NEXT STEPS AND OPEN QUESTIONS

As North Carolina continues to have conversations around a potential switch to weighted student funding, there remain open questions that require further discussion and examination before any specific formula can be considered or recommended.

Position Allotments

Study group members generally agreed that North Carolina's teacher pay scale needs structural updates, though perspectives varied on the value of position allotments. Most district leaders believe strongly that position allotments provide crucial staffing guarantees, allowing districts to hire the best teacher candidates possible regardless of salary cost. However, current policies restrict flexibility within allotments, which can limit leaders' ability to implement innovative strategies to address staffing challenges.

Study group members also expressed mixed views on whether the benefits of a weighted student funding formula would outweigh the risks of losing the current guaranteed position allotments. Many participants emphasized that a transition away from position allotments would require substantial new state investment to ensure districts can continue attracting and retaining experienced, highly effective educators.

To bridge this gap, policymakers could consider developing a hybrid model: retaining guaranteed position allotments while converting other categorical elements into a weighted student funding formula. In 2025, Alabama implemented a hybrid model that preserves baseline funding for enrollment and staffing while adding layered student weights to address specific student needs.⁵¹

Adequacy

The study group broadly agreed that the state of North Carolina is not adequately funding its public schools. The state remains out of compliance with its constitutional obligation to provide every child with a sound basic education, and significant additional investment will be required to meet this mandate. To illustrate potential paths forward, the four models analyzed in this report demonstrate a spectrum of state funding scenarios ranging from revenue-neutral options to an additional investment exceeding \$8 billion annually.

While determining the exact cost of fully funding our state's public schools fell outside the scope of this study group, there was strong agreement that a revenue-neutral model or a model with minimal investment would be harmful for our students and unpopular with education stakeholders writ large, especially if it includes the loss of guaranteed position allotments.

Implementation Considerations

Several key implementation considerations will require further discussion before any changes are made to our funding model. First, the switch to a weighted student funding system in North Carolina would require considerable training and support for districts. District officials, county commissioners, and school boards will need technical assistance to effectively navigate new operational flexibility and align resource allocation with student needs.

Additionally, the transition to a new funding formula will likely require new or adjusted data collection and reporting mechanisms, especially if the state utilizes new eligibility criteria represented in this report for low-income students and students with disabilities. Prior to implementation, the state must establish clear, standardized data collection protocols applicable to both traditional public schools and charter schools

Low-Wealth Formula

The study group did not consider changes to the current low-wealth funding formula, although there was consensus that it needed to be examined alongside any changes to a revised system. The low-wealth supplemental funding from the state was held constant during modeling.

State Mandates

The study group held productive discussions on state mandates and the role of those mandates within a revised funding system. There was consensus among the group that any state mandates that require additional costs, such as class size requirements or threat assessment screenings, must be accompanied by dedicated state funding.

CONCLUSION

The Public School Forum's study group on weighted student funding set out to convene a representative group of education stakeholders to develop a common understanding of weighted student funding, evaluate possibilities to strengthen the state's school funding system, and to assess the potential impact of a transitioning to weighted student funding for local public schools and charter schools across the state. Model prototypes clearly demonstrated potential benefits of weighted student funding, with the caveat that realizing these benefits will depend heavily on the specific formula design, overall investment levels, and how changes are implemented.

The guiding principles and non-negotiables presented in this report provide a foundation as state officials continue conversations on funding reform. The Forum and study group participants remain committed to supporting those discussions through stakeholder engagement, scenario modeling, and ongoing policy analysis.

About the Public School Forum of North Carolina

Since our founding in 1985 as a nonpartisan “think and do tank,” the Public School Forum of North Carolina has been a champion of better schools and one of the most trusted sources in the state for research and analysis on vital education issues. In order to provide meaningful action on our state's most important public education issues, we bring together leaders from business, education and government to study education issues, develop ideas, and ultimately inform and shape education policy. We do this through research, policy work, innovative programs, advocacy, and continuing education for educators and policymakers.

Our Mission

To inspire meaningful action on North Carolina's most important public education issues.

Our Vision

All North Carolina children shall have the opportunity to reach their full potential through equitable and meaningful public education that nourishes our state's civic and economic vitality.

**PUBLIC SCHOOL
FORUM** of north carolina

APPENDIX A: WSF COMPARISON TABLE

Formula amounts for the 2025-26 school year.

	<u>AL</u> ⁵²	<u>FL</u> ⁵³	<u>MS</u> ⁵⁴	<u>SC</u> ⁵⁵	<u>TN</u> ⁵⁶
Base Amount	\$7,547*	\$5,373	\$6,843	\$5,884*	\$7,295
Low-Income	2.25%	None	30%	50%	25%
Conc. Poverty	None	None	Sliding scale up to 10%	None	5%
Special Education	2-75%	361 - 606%	60 - 130%	260%	15 - 150%
Gifted	4.5%	None	5%	15%	None
English Language Learner	7-9%	16.5%	15%	20%	20-70%
Sparsity	None	None	0 - 8%	None	5%
Small District	None	3.73%	None	None	5%
Career+ Technical Education	None	8.1%	10%	120%	\$5,000 - \$5,700
Required Local Share?	Yes, \$10 for every \$1,000 in property value	Yes, varies.	The lower of (A) 27% of the formula amount, or (B) the value of 28 mills.	Yes, 30% statewide but varies based on fiscal capacity	Yes, 30% statewide but varies based on fiscal capacity

*Not a consistent per-pupil base amount.

Alabama

There is not a true base amount, the majority of funding is disbursed with a resource-based formula, the average of which creates an “inferred” base to which the weights are applied. Student-based weights are phased in and increased depending on budget capacity on an annual basis. The above table identifies the actual weights for the 2025-26 school year, but the RAISE act sets forth the following “up-to” amounts for each category: ⁵⁷

- Economically Disadvantaged: up to 20%
- Multilingual Learners: up to 15-20%, the higher of which is for high concentrations
- Special Education: up to 25-150% with tiering definitions subject to regulation and not specified in law
- AIG: up to 5% based on a 5% census assumption

Mississippi

The base amount is increased annually by 25% X the 20-year average annual change in the rate of inflation. The 2025-26 base was finalized in appropriations bill HB1768. ⁵⁸ Additional weight information is as follows:

- Concentrated poverty: weights begin at >35% direct certification
- Special Education: Tiers based on disability category.
- Gifted: Based on 5% census assumption.

South Carolina

The base amount is not traditional. The total amount of funding is determined annually based on a statewide average teacher salary and teacher:student ratio, which is used to determine the total funding amount; this is that total expressed as a per-pupil allocation. That statewide total amount is then allocated to districts based on weighted per-pupil allocations and local fiscal capacity. Additional weight information is as follows:

- Gifted: Includes enrollment in AP and IB, as well as being identified as gifted and talented by other means.
- Academic Assistance: A 15% weight available to those who do not meet state standards in mathematics, English language arts, or both on state-approved assessments in grades three through eight and high school assessments for grades nine through twelve.

Tennessee

Tennessee's formula features a number of direct funding categories that provide a flat dollar amount to qualified students as follows:

- CTE: Provided for student participation in CTE courses, structured to incentivize districts to align offerings with in-demand careers
- K-3 Literacy: \$500 provided to all K-3 students, Intended to support early literacy instruction
- 4th Grade Support: \$500 provided to rising fourth graders who need additional supports in literacy based on their 3rd grade English Language Arts performance
- ACT: \$43 provided for students who take the ACT in their 11th or 12th grade years

APPENDIX B: STUDY GROUP

Representatives from the following organizations and districts were invited to participate and engaged in the Study Group:

- Afton Partners
- Appalachian State University
- Ashe County Schools
- Bellwether
- BEST NC
- Buncombe County Schools
- Caldwell County schools
- Center for Racial Equity in Education
- Central Carolina Regional Education Service Alliance
- Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools Board of Education
- Chatham County Public Schools
- Dare County Schools
- Dudley Flood Center for Educational Equity and Opportunity
- Durham Public Schools
- EdTrust-Tennessee
- Education Justice Alliance
- Fiscal Research Division NCGA (technical advising role only)
- Franklin County Schools
- Great Schools NC
- Greene County Schools
- Harnett County Schools
- John Locke Foundation
- LatinxEd
- myFutureNC
- New Hanover County Schools
- NC Association for Public Charter Schools
- NC Association of County Commissioners
- NC Association of Educators
- NC Association of School Business Officials
- NC Community College System
- NC Department of Public Instruction
- NC House of Representatives
- NC Justice Center
- NC Office of State Budget and Management (technical advising role only)
- NC School Boards Association
- NC Senate
- NC State Board of Education
- NC State Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Onslow County Schools
- Public Ed Works
- Reason Foundation
- Rockingham County Schools
- Sandhills Regional Education Service Alliance
- Southeast Education Alliance
- Surry County Schools
- Teach for America NC
- Union County Schools
- UNC-Chapel Hill Kenan Flagler School of Business
- UNC-Chapel Hill School of Education
- Wake County Public Schools
- Wayne County Public Schools
- Winston Salem-Forsyth County Schools

Study Group Timeline

May 2024	Introduced weighted student funding as a concept, including how it functions in other southern states
December 2024	Prioritized components and non-negotiables for a new funding model
February 2025	Learned from stakeholders in Tennessee and Mississippi about creating a weighted student funding model from conception to implementation and established a smaller working group to prepare model drafts
April 2025	Drafted guiding principles and opportunity/problem statements; analyzed the current state funding formula and mapped out where allotments would fit into a weighted student funding formula
May 2025	Explored initial formulas using a simulator to identify impact on funding levels across the state
June 2025	Finalized guiding principles and non-negotiables for any weighted student funding formula considerations; Previewed initial set of weighted student funding formulas for comparison
September 2025	Learned from superintendents who have had direct experience working under a weighted student funding formula
November 2025	Presented updated set of weighted student funding formula models utilizing 2024-25 North Carolina data and discussed reactions and feedback to the prototypes
January 2026	Continued to iterate on the prototype models to finalize the weight categories and values
March 2026	Held three topic-specific deeper discussions on position allotments, career and technical education funding, and state mandates
April 2026	Presented the final model prototypes to finalize different base amounts for comparison

Bellwether Weight Prioritization Worksheet



Weighted Student Funding Working Session
December 12, 2024

Instructions

In your small groups: 1) Appoint a notetaker. 2) Briefly discuss each weight listed below and add must-have elements not included. 3) Rank the weights by relative importance (1-10, add, or eliminate), 4) Indicate if this weight should have sub-tiers or categories.

	Include? (Y/N)	Priority Rank (1 - 10)	Needs Range or Tiers? (Y/N)
Student Groups			
Economically Disadvantaged			
English Learners			
Exceptional Children (Students with Disabilities)			
Gifted			
District Factors			
Sparse/Rural			
Concentrated Poverty			
Community Wealth			
Small Districts			
Programmatic Priorities			
Career and Technical Ed			
Transportation			

APPENDIX C: MODELING + DATA

Current Funding Calculation

In this report, current funding includes the following allotments. Any additional allotments outside of this calculation should be considered separately and held constant. These allotments add up to \$10.8B of state-funded investment in K-12 education for the 2024-25 school year.

State Initial Allotments

- 1.PRC 001: Classroom Teachers
- 2.PRC 002: Central Office
- 3.PRC 003: Noninstructional Support
- 4.PRC 004: Program Enhancement Teachers
- 5.PRC 005: School Building Administration
- 6.PRC 006: School Health Support
- 7.PRC 007: Instructional Support
- 8.PRC 013: Career Technical Education Positions
- 9.PRC 014: Career Technical Education Support
- 10.PRC 019: Small County Supplemental Funding
- 11.PRC 024: Disadvantaged Student Supplemental Funding
- 12.PRC 027: Teacher Assistants
- 13.PRC 031: Low Wealth County Supplemental Funding
- 14.PRC 034: Academically and Intellectually Gifted
- 15.PRC 061: Instructional Supplies
- 16.PRC 069: At-Risk Students
- 17.PRC 131: Textbooks
- 18.PRC 036: Charter Schools
- 19.PRC 037: Restart Schools and Renewal School Systems
- 20.PRC 038: “Z” Schools

Year To Date (YTD) Allotments

- 1.PRC 032: Children with Disabilities
- 2.PRC 054: Limited English Proficiency
- 3.PRC 094: Average Daily Membership (ADM) Growth
- 4.PRC 067: Assistant Principal Interns
- 5.PRC 048: Principal and Other Teacher Performance Bonuses
- 6.PRC 071: Supplemental Funds for Teacher Compensation

For purposes of comparing the model output, we calculated a “base amount” for the current system. The current base amount reported includes Classroom Teachers, Central Office, School Building Administration, Instructional Personnel and Support Services, Noninstructional Personnel and Support Services, Teacher Assistants, School Health Support, Program Enhancement Teachers, Instructional Supplies, Textbooks, “Z” Schools, Restart Schools, ADM Growth, Assistant Principal Interns, and Principal and Other Teacher Performance Bonuses.

Additionally, in the comparison tables, current low-income student funding includes both Disadvantaged Student Supplemental Funding and At Risk Students, current low-wealth funding includes both Low-Wealth County Supplemental Funding and Supplemental Funds for Teacher Compensation (due to its intended purpose of supporting low-wealth communities), and Career and Technical Education includes both Career Technical Education Positions and Career and Technical Education Support.

Special Education Tiers

In the models presented in this report, the additional weight for exceptional children assigns tiers by diagnosis as follows:

Tier 1:

- LD: Specific Learning Disability
- SI: Speech or Language Impairment
- OH: Other Health Impairment
- IDMI: Intellectual Disability - Mild

Tier 2:

- AU: Autism
- IDMO: Intellectual Disability - Moderate
- DD: Developmental Delay
- MU: Multiple Disabilities

Tier 3:

- ED: Serious Emotional Disability
- HI: Hearing Impairment
- OI: Orthopedic Impairment
- VI: Visual Impairment including Blindness
- DB: Deaf-Blindness
- DF: Deafness
- TB: Traumatic Brain Injury
- IDSE: Intellectual Disability - Severe

As stated in the report, the Forum supports using hours of service to assign tiers rather than diagnosis. Doing so more accurately captures the additional funding needed for the individual student and for the district as a whole. This data is not currently publicly available, but it did provide the foundation for DPI’s recommendation of shifting to a weighted student funding formula for EC funding.

Variable Data Sources

Due to data availability throughout the process, this report includes data from the 2024-25 school year, unless otherwise noted. The following variables and data sources were included in the modeling presented in this report:

- **Current Allotments:** [NCDPI School Allotment Data](#)
- **Average Daily Membership (ADM):** NCDPI Statistical Profile [Table A1](#)
- **Low-Income/Poverty Enrollment:** Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) for [2024](#)
- **Special Education Enrollment:** NCDPI Statistical Profile [Table 9](#)
- **Multilingual Learner Enrollment:** Report to the NC General Assembly [Headcount of English Learners December 2024](#)
- **Students per Square Mile:** Calculated using tigris R package with geographic data from the US Census Bureau

APPENDIX D: MODEL IMPACT BY DISTRICT

Per-Pupil Impact of Presented Models by District

District	Model 1 Per Pupil Difference	Model 2 Per Pupil Difference	Model 3 Per Pupil Difference	Model 4 Per Pupil Difference
Alamance-Burlington Schools	\$181.34	\$1,093.28	\$2,904.86	\$6,083.66
Alexander County Schools	-\$366.72	\$544.81	\$2,355.58	\$5,532.96
Alleghany County Schools	-\$2,165.91	-\$1,152.82	\$859.69	\$4,391.09
Anson County Schools	\$36.95	\$1,066.27	\$3,111.01	\$6,698.96
Ashe County Schools	-\$291.45	\$757.71	\$2,841.88	\$6,498.99
Avery County Schools	-\$1,625.49	-\$600.83	\$1,434.65	\$5,006.34
Beaufort County Schools	\$534.82	\$1,559.57	\$3,595.26	\$7,167.31
Bertie County Schools	-\$1,247.69	-\$156.49	\$2,011.18	\$5,814.83
Bladen County Schools	\$679.80	\$1,747.76	\$3,869.28	\$7,591.93
Brunswick County Schools	\$110.11	\$1,009.64	\$2,796.58	\$5,932.14
Buncombe County Schools	-\$252.27	\$630.87	\$2,385.22	\$5,463.61
Asheville City Schools	-\$547.06	\$341.33	\$2,106.14	\$5,202.88
Burke County Schools	\$24.55	\$954.24	\$2,801.08	\$6,041.77
Cabarrus County Schools	\$54.08	\$902.59	\$2,588.17	\$5,545.89
Kannapolis City Schools	\$25.30	\$925.97	\$2,715.16	\$5,854.68
Caldwell County Schools	\$462.88	\$1,334.90	\$3,067.19	\$6,106.87
Camden County Schools	-\$1,584.24	-\$666.69	\$1,156.04	\$4,354.42

District	Model 1 Per Pupil Difference	Model 2 Per Pupil Difference	Model 3 Per Pupil Difference	Model 4 Per Pupil Difference
Carteret County Schools	\$140.02	\$1,094.12	\$2,989.45	\$6,315.21
Caswell County Schools	-\$277.25	\$798.85	\$2,936.54	\$6,687.57
Catawba County Schools	\$228.88	\$1,104.01	\$2,842.45	\$5,892.92
Hickory City Schools	-\$226.93	\$693.34	\$2,521.46	\$5,729.30
Newton-Conover City Schools	-\$343.55	\$577.15	\$2,406.14	\$5,615.49
Chatham County Schools	-\$428.62	\$457.94	\$2,219.10	\$5,309.44
Cherokee County Schools	\$390.87	\$1,351.72	\$3,260.46	\$6,609.75
Edenton-Chowan Schools	-\$1,513.90	-\$520.05	\$1,454.23	\$4,918.54
Clay County Schools	-\$2,062.58	-\$1,078.50	\$876.37	\$4,306.62
Cleveland County Schools	-\$25.62	\$892.94	\$2,717.67	\$5,919.54
Columbus County Schools	\$400.78	\$1,378.83	\$3,321.74	\$6,731.00
Whiteville City Schools	-\$883.59	\$13.49	\$1,795.53	\$4,922.51
Craven County Schools	-\$125.80	\$775.91	\$2,567.15	\$5,710.28
Cumberland County Schools	\$177.76	\$1,080.36	\$2,873.37	\$6,019.61
Currituck County Schools	-\$33.16	\$862.63	\$2,642.13	\$5,764.63
Dare County Schools	\$247.15	\$1,266.38	\$3,291.08	\$6,843.87
Davidson County Schools	-\$28.38	\$845.79	\$2,582.34	\$5,629.49
Lexington City Schools	-\$447.61	\$493.94	\$2,364.36	\$5,646.40
Thomasville City Schools	-\$473.78	\$452.74	\$2,293.26	\$5,522.87
Davie County Schools	-\$205.89	\$682.20	\$2,446.39	\$5,542.04
Duplin County Schools	\$238.79	\$1,129.56	\$2,899.06	\$6,004.04

District	Model 1 Per Pupil Difference	Model 2 Per Pupil Difference	Model 3 Per Pupil Difference	Model 4 Per Pupil Difference
Durham Public Schools	\$41.06	\$972.12	\$2,821.68	\$6,067.13
Edgecombe County Schools	-\$380.81	\$588.78	\$2,514.87	\$5,894.61
Forsyth County Schools	-\$1.71	\$910.48	\$2,722.55	\$5,902.22
Franklin County Schools	-\$136.63	\$767.16	\$2,562.56	\$5,712.97
Gaston County Schools	\$83.36	\$975.00	\$2,746.24	\$5,854.28
Gates County Schools	-\$1,634.38	-\$608.09	\$1,430.63	\$5,008.01
Graham County Schools	-\$1,439.26	-\$432.54	\$1,567.32	\$5,076.51
Granville County Schools	-\$194.70	\$727.74	\$2,560.16	\$5,775.55
Greene County Schools	-\$838.91	\$91.93	\$1,941.04	\$5,185.70
Guilford County Schools	\$80.79	\$990.92	\$2,798.91	\$5,971.40
Halifax County Schools	-\$1,156.23	-\$65.98	\$2,099.82	\$5,900.18
Roanoke Rapids City Schools	-\$569.77	\$350.97	\$2,180.03	\$5,389.52
Weldon City Schools	-\$3,403.78	-\$2,445.87	-\$542.97	\$2,796.09
Harnett County Schools	\$298.12	\$1,191.99	\$2,967.66	\$6,083.47
Haywood County Schools	\$90.97	\$1,011.78	\$2,840.97	\$6,050.68
Henderson County Schools	-\$130.52	\$765.33	\$2,544.95	\$5,667.67
Hertford County Schools	-\$1,118.33	-\$83.59	\$1,971.93	\$5,578.78
Hoke County Schools	\$30.54	\$942.66	\$2,754.60	\$5,934.02
Hyde County Schools	-\$6,877.06	-\$5,740.60	-\$3,483.01	\$478.41
Iredell-Statesville Schools	\$62.64	\$929.45	\$2,651.37	\$5,672.87
Mooresville City Schools	-\$45.46	\$819.21	\$2,536.87	\$5,550.88

District	Model 1 Per Pupil Difference	Model 2 Per Pupil Difference	Model 3 Per Pupil Difference	Model 4 Per Pupil Difference
Jackson County Schools	\$323.40	\$1,322.21	\$3,306.37	\$6,787.99
Johnston County Schools	\$171.46	\$1,071.29	\$2,858.80	\$5,995.38
Jones County Schools	-\$2,201.14	-\$1,041.61	\$1,261.80	\$5,303.64
Lee County Schools	\$163.36	\$1,069.57	\$2,869.78	\$6,028.63
Lenoir County Schools	\$265.17	\$1,223.85	\$3,128.26	\$6,469.97
Lincoln County Schools	-\$163.19	\$714.93	\$2,459.32	\$5,520.23
Macon County Schools	-\$34.20	\$934.21	\$2,857.96	\$6,233.59
Madison County Schools	-\$944.72	\$97.49	\$2,167.86	\$5,800.77
Martin County Schools	-\$306.33	\$774.79	\$2,922.45	\$6,690.97
McDowell County Schools	-\$378.93	\$553.66	\$2,406.26	\$5,657.04
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	\$126.58	\$1,011.85	\$2,770.44	\$5,856.28
Mitchell County Schools	-\$1,411.39	-\$405.20	\$1,593.60	\$5,100.93
Montgomery County Schools	-\$91.51	\$874.78	\$2,794.32	\$6,162.57
Moore County Schools	-\$25.54	\$852.46	\$2,596.60	\$5,657.08
Nash-Rocky Mount Schools	\$129.21	\$1,032.39	\$2,826.57	\$5,974.84
New Hanover County Schools	-\$215.31	\$667.65	\$2,421.64	\$5,499.41
Northampton County Schools	-\$2,067.52	-\$882.82	\$1,470.58	\$5,600.14
Onslow County Schools	\$394.71	\$1,308.29	\$3,123.12	\$6,307.62
Orange County Schools	-\$296.60	\$590.93	\$2,354.02	\$5,447.75
Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools	-\$351.71	\$500.19	\$2,192.50	\$5,162.04
Pamlico County Schools	-\$2,165.34	-\$1,078.56	\$1,080.33	\$4,868.57

District	Model 1 Per Pupil Difference	Model 2 Per Pupil Difference	Model 3 Per Pupil Difference	Model 4 Per Pupil Difference
Pasquotank County Schools	-\$644.56	\$280.33	\$2,117.62	\$5,341.56
Pender County Schools	\$556.49	\$1,411.18	\$3,109.02	\$6,088.26
Perquimans County Schools	-\$749.29	\$268.33	\$2,289.84	\$5,837.03
Person County Schools	\$100.89	\$1,027.67	\$2,868.72	\$6,099.24
Pitt County Schools	\$43.46	\$940.68	\$2,723.03	\$5,850.55
Polk County Schools	-\$1,242.09	-\$269.85	\$1,661.51	\$5,050.51
Randolph County Schools	-\$176.97	\$703.10	\$2,451.35	\$5,519.05
Asheboro City Schools	-\$60.66	\$851.52	\$2,663.56	\$5,843.18
Richmond County Schools	\$237.06	\$1,189.14	\$3,080.46	\$6,399.19
Robeson County Schools	-\$98.72	\$822.52	\$2,652.57	\$5,863.80
Rockingham County Schools	-\$30.89	\$920.39	\$2,810.11	\$6,126.03
Rowan-Salisbury Schools	\$742.38	\$1,636.24	\$3,411.90	\$6,527.68
Rutherford County Schools	\$944.89	\$1,841.63	\$3,622.99	\$6,748.79
Sampson County Schools	\$114.01	\$1,066.19	\$2,957.69	\$6,276.75
Clinton City Schools	-\$520.45	\$344.46	\$2,062.62	\$5,077.49
Scotland County Schools	\$176.89	\$1,155.80	\$3,100.43	\$6,512.69
Stanly County Schools	-\$272.21	\$597.63	\$2,325.58	\$5,357.65
Stokes County Schools	-\$266.32	\$649.65	\$2,469.25	\$5,662.12
Surry County Schools	-\$159.62	\$758.98	\$2,583.79	\$5,785.82
Elkin City Schools	-\$1,409.79	-\$532.35	\$1,210.69	\$4,269.22
Mount Airy City Schools	-\$717.50	\$208.09	\$2,046.78	\$5,273.16

District	Model 1 Per Pupil Difference	Model 2 Per Pupil Difference	Model 3 Per Pupil Difference	Model 4 Per Pupil Difference
Swain County Schools	-\$603.29	\$445.15	\$2,527.88	\$6,182.49
Transylvania County Schools	-\$576.99	\$413.31	\$2,380.55	\$5,832.49
Tyrrell County Schools	-\$7,219.34	-\$6,094.85	-\$3,861.02	\$58.70
Union County Public Schools	\$19.76	\$859.37	\$2,527.28	\$5,453.99
Vance County Schools	-\$673.59	\$276.92	\$2,165.13	\$5,478.39
Wake County Schools	-\$55.69	\$809.89	\$2,529.37	\$5,546.57
Warren County Schools	-\$1,672.83	-\$538.74	\$1,714.14	\$5,667.30
Washington County Schools	-\$2,564.45	-\$1,416.67	\$863.39	\$4,864.26
Watauga County Schools	-\$537.38	\$359.94	\$2,142.48	\$5,270.34
Wayne County Public Schools	\$265.59	\$1,224.27	\$3,128.71	\$6,470.45
Wilkes County Schools	\$65.04	\$1,002.11	\$2,863.60	\$6,129.98
Wilson County Schools	\$269.78	\$1,195.82	\$3,035.39	\$6,263.32
Yadkin County Schools	-\$419.27	\$497.95	\$2,320.01	\$5,517.22
Yancey County Schools	-\$1,290.71	-\$305.50	\$1,651.63	\$5,085.83

Total Impact of Presented Models by District

District	Model 1 Total Difference	Model 2 Total Difference	Model 3 Total Difference	Model 4 Total Difference
Alamance-Burlington Schools	\$4,027,102.71	\$24,278,537.70	\$64,508,149.94	\$135,099,733.68
Alexander County Schools	-\$1,522,615.40	\$2,262,066.00	\$9,780,361.13	\$22,972,841.25
Alleghany County Schools	-\$2,724,716.70	-\$1,450,247.29	\$1,081,494.80	\$5,523,985.63
Anson County Schools	\$106,754.77	\$3,080,449.17	\$8,987,713.16	\$19,353,289.59
Ashe County Schools	-\$742,027.35	\$1,929,134.00	\$7,235,414.05	\$16,546,433.74
Avery County Schools	-\$2,696,680.02	-\$996,779.78	\$2,380,083.51	\$8,305,522.88
Beaufort County Schools	\$2,919,558.88	\$8,513,703.59	\$19,626,509.79	\$39,126,339.55
Bertie County Schools	-\$1,960,118.24	-\$245,847.32	\$3,159,563.44	\$9,135,095.52
Bladen County Schools	\$2,585,964.02	\$6,648,490.80	\$14,718,727.65	\$28,879,709.29
Brunswick County Schools	\$1,465,434.86	\$13,437,359.50	\$37,219,668.56	\$78,950,890.13
Buncombe County Schools	-\$5,467,597.61	\$13,673,458.80	\$51,697,296.50	\$118,418,370.20
Asheville City Schools	-\$2,061,338.77	\$1,286,144.80	\$7,935,943.50	\$19,604,458.20
Burke County Schools	\$272,021.11	\$10,573,954.50	\$31,038,814.69	\$66,948,852.38
Cabarrus County Schools	\$1,892,638.80	\$31,589,822.30	\$90,583,477.69	\$194,100,646.58
Kannapolis City Schools	\$134,067.41	\$4,907,623.00	\$14,390,323.38	\$31,029,778.75
Caldwell County Schools	\$5,447,593.35	\$15,710,485.90	\$36,097,791.19	\$71,871,741.98
Camden County Schools	-\$2,997,387.53	-\$1,261,371.77	\$2,187,235.26	\$8,238,564.56
Carteret County Schools	\$1,071,409.41	\$8,372,187.97	\$22,875,233.84	\$48,323,974.71
Caswell County Schools	-\$558,381.61	\$1,608,887.78	\$5,914,183.04	\$13,468,757.75

District	Model 1 Total Difference	Model 2 Total Difference	Model 3 Total Difference	Model 4 Total Difference
Catawba County Schools	\$3,761,881.28	\$18,145,446.80	\$46,718,496.75	\$96,856,112.70
Hickory City Schools	-\$818,088.55	\$2,499,485.05	\$9,089,867.38	\$20,654,123.17
Newton-Conover City Schools	-\$880,187.50	\$1,478,658.00	\$6,164,520.50	\$14,386,883.00
Chatham County Schools	-\$3,755,147.24	\$4,012,021.40	\$19,441,554.31	\$46,516,017.73
Cherokee County Schools	\$1,355,147.76	\$4,686,417.83	\$11,304,008.30	\$22,916,006.67
Edenton-Chowan Schools	-\$2,496,416.23	-\$857,562.57	\$2,398,031.29	\$8,110,677.12
Clay County Schools	-\$2,567,909.07	-\$1,342,735.20	\$1,091,080.95	\$5,361,739.48
Cleveland County Schools	-\$355,174.56	\$12,377,912.80	\$37,672,276.75	\$82,056,726.70
Columbus County Schools	\$2,041,561.22	\$7,023,763.82	\$16,920,942.88	\$34,287,691.06
Whiteville City Schools	-\$1,744,204.79	\$26,620.47	\$3,544,376.78	\$9,717,043.52
Craven County Schools	-\$1,480,878.66	\$9,134,006.80	\$30,220,548.38	\$67,221,460.95
Cumberland County Schools	\$8,504,077.53	\$51,684,342.44	\$137,462,230.01	\$287,978,145.92
Currituck County Schools	-\$148,502.06	\$3,863,739.43	\$11,834,084.21	\$25,819,783.56
Dare County Schools	\$1,181,865.07	\$6,055,819.25	\$15,737,962.11	\$32,727,382.59
Davidson County Schools	-\$497,451.49	\$14,826,780.80	\$45,268,471.63	\$98,685,023.45
Lexington City Schools	-\$1,254,664.40	\$1,384,525.91	\$6,627,295.25	\$15,826,871.65
Thomasville City Schools	-\$988,774.14	\$944,861.96	\$4,786,043.11	\$11,526,228.92
Davie County Schools	-\$1,219,666.06	\$4,041,353.80	\$14,492,405.25	\$32,831,042.70
Duplin County Schools	\$2,263,046.06	\$10,704,797.27	\$27,474,393.00	\$56,900,287.40
Durham Public Schools	\$1,261,454.53	\$29,865,491.40	\$86,687,603.63	\$186,394,328.85
Edgecombe County Schools	-\$2,325,213.40	\$3,595,076.60	\$15,355,772.63	\$35,992,465.65

District	Model 1 Total Difference	Model 2 Total Difference	Model 3 Total Difference	Model 4 Total Difference
Forsyth County Schools	-\$85,751.99	\$45,619,542.90	\$136,413,419.56	\$295,730,976.73
Franklin County Schools	-\$1,062,864.66	\$5,967,765.90	\$19,934,160.94	\$44,441,231.48
Gaston County Schools	\$2,529,619.04	\$29,588,201.90	\$83,340,259.31	\$177,659,907.23
Gates County Schools	-\$2,201,509.66	-\$819,103.19	\$1,927,056.59	\$6,745,789.78
Graham County Schools	-\$1,694,005.53	-\$509,095.23	\$1,844,737.06	\$5,975,046.55
Granville County Schools	-\$1,204,994.60	\$4,503,962.15	\$15,844,843.24	\$35,744,879.88
Greene County Schools	-\$2,253,301.61	\$246,921.49	\$5,213,631.56	\$13,928,802.06
Guilford County Schools	\$5,302,520.09	\$65,037,197.50	\$183,700,537.19	\$391,921,114.38
Halifax County Schools	-\$2,334,438.07	-\$133,212.81	\$4,239,536.01	\$11,912,472.62
Roanoke Rapids City Schools	-\$1,456,909.61	\$897,429.30	\$5,574,339.44	\$13,780,993.08
Weldon City Schools	-\$2,103,538.78	-\$1,511,547.60	-\$335,553.13	\$1,727,984.35
Harnett County Schools	\$5,848,469.23	\$23,384,376.80	\$58,219,575.50	\$119,345,490.20
Haywood County Schools	\$600,612.06	\$6,679,782.61	\$18,756,095.92	\$39,946,607.96
Henderson County Schools	-\$1,613,378.88	\$9,460,243.50	\$31,458,069.06	\$70,058,027.13
Hertford County Schools	-\$2,435,726.80	-\$182,061.25	\$4,294,860.57	\$12,150,591.32
Hoke County Schools	\$258,368.52	\$7,973,991.47	\$23,301,128.51	\$50,195,916.15
Hyde County Schools	-\$2,984,644.37	-\$2,491,420.33	-\$1,511,627.45	\$207,631.75
Iredell-Statesville Schools	\$1,290,957.84	\$19,155,935.20	\$54,644,833.25	\$116,917,805.30
Mooresville City Schools	-\$261,329.14	\$4,709,628.10	\$14,584,468.19	\$31,912,017.78
Jackson County Schools	\$1,100,527.26	\$4,499,493.67	\$11,251,563.38	\$23,099,534.76
Johnston County Schools	\$6,303,637.64	\$39,384,880.00	\$105,100,991.13	\$220,414,167.25

District	Model 1 Total Difference	Model 2 Total Difference	Model 3 Total Difference	Model 4 Total Difference
Jones County Schools	-\$2,051,465.21	-\$970,782.95	\$1,175,999.65	\$4,942,995.54
Lee County Schools	\$1,546,319.22	\$10,124,562.20	\$27,165,299.75	\$57,066,971.30
Lenoir County Schools	\$2,112,078.70	\$9,747,930.39	\$24,916,601.30	\$51,533,325.72
Lincoln County Schools	-\$1,850,291.04	\$8,105,827.20	\$27,883,723.25	\$62,588,333.30
Macon County Schools	-\$147,297.83	\$4,023,632.38	\$12,309,213.39	\$26,848,063.09
Madison County Schools	-\$1,880,939.92	\$194,109.70	\$4,316,209.75	\$11,549,328.73
Martin County Schools	-\$771,341.29	\$1,950,922.29	\$7,358,717.28	\$16,847,866.97
McDowell County Schools	-\$1,994,329.66	\$2,913,897.41	\$12,664,123.60	\$29,773,011.07
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	\$17,822,276.49	\$142,469,115.10	\$390,080,900.94	\$824,569,506.28
Mitchell County Schools	-\$2,341,496.75	-\$672,229.61	\$2,643,780.81	\$8,462,440.62
Montgomery County Schools	-\$312,862.27	\$2,990,878.62	\$9,553,782.18	\$21,069,820.50
Moore County Schools	-\$328,436.49	\$10,962,592.20	\$33,392,296.88	\$72,750,080.55
Nash-Rocky Mount Schools	\$1,686,412.84	\$13,474,749.40	\$36,892,359.50	\$77,983,637.60
New Hanover County Schools	-\$5,217,306.74	\$16,178,459.80	\$58,681,294.38	\$133,261,739.95
Northampton County Schools	-\$2,390,051.85	-\$1,020,544.64	\$1,699,990.68	\$6,473,760.19
Onslow County Schools	\$10,540,021.11	\$34,935,268.30	\$83,396,591.44	\$168,432,498.08
Orange County Schools	-\$2,041,515.35	\$4,067,377.90	\$16,202,735.56	\$37,496,853.73
Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools	-\$3,891,696.77	\$5,534,621.70	\$24,260,066.94	\$57,117,923.68
Pamlico County Schools	-\$2,323,412.50	-\$1,157,299.44	\$1,159,192.02	\$5,223,978.92
Pasquotank County Schools	-\$2,945,643.42	\$1,281,092.77	\$9,677,532.74	\$24,410,908.53
Pender County Schools	\$6,619,446.85	\$16,785,967.90	\$36,981,830.56	\$72,419,853.73

District	Model 1 Total Difference	Model 2 Total Difference	Model 3 Total Difference	Model 4 Total Difference
Perquimans County Schools	-\$1,285,038.70	\$460,184.57	\$3,927,082.38	\$10,010,506.85
Person County Schools	\$458,762.91	\$4,672,822.25	\$13,044,079.55	\$27,733,266.90
Pitt County Schools	\$1,028,047.29	\$22,253,746.50	\$64,418,741.19	\$138,406,373.38
Polk County Schools	-\$2,438,230.50	-\$529,721.37	\$3,261,544.91	\$9,914,144.23
Randolph County Schools	-\$2,596,849.15	\$10,317,238.00	\$35,971,159.25	\$80,986,530.50
Asheboro City Schools	-\$274,967.71	\$3,859,919.70	\$12,073,901.44	\$26,487,114.68
Richmond County Schools	\$1,507,474.00	\$7,561,770.82	\$19,588,672.31	\$40,692,480.57
Robeson County Schools	-\$1,986,838.91	\$16,553,173.28	\$53,383,032.57	\$118,009,012.08
Rockingham County Schools	-\$330,283.41	\$9,840,772.77	\$30,045,644.49	\$65,499,476.00
Rowan-Salisbury Schools	\$12,944,069.62	\$28,529,433.27	\$59,489,863.30	\$113,816,655.62
Rutherford County Schools	\$8,128,915.20	\$15,843,510.90	\$31,168,607.31	\$58,059,814.23
Sampson County Schools	\$879,726.71	\$8,226,716.60	\$22,821,561.58	\$48,431,383.90
Clinton City Schools	-\$1,491,606.93	\$987,230.30	\$5,911,457.16	\$14,552,081.67
Scotland County Schools	\$912,214.49	\$5,960,481.70	\$15,988,898.56	\$33,585,931.93
Stanly County Schools	-\$2,350,536.24	\$5,160,567.10	\$20,081,424.56	\$46,263,306.53
Stokes County Schools	-\$1,426,962.37	\$3,480,845.02	\$13,230,237.51	\$30,337,662.08
Surry County Schools	-\$1,127,262.30	\$5,359,918.46	\$18,246,746.80	\$40,859,483.33
Elkin City Schools	-\$1,708,660.06	-\$645,206.60	\$1,467,350.88	\$5,174,291.35
Mount Airy City Schools	-\$1,216,885.28	\$352,915.11	\$3,471,334.16	\$8,943,277.02
Swain County Schools	-\$1,077,484.17	\$795,030.53	\$4,514,793.62	\$11,041,925.07
Transylvania County Schools	-\$1,781,743.20	\$1,276,301.95	\$7,351,129.27	\$18,010,731.93

District	Model 1 Total Difference	Model 2 Total Difference	Model 3 Total Difference	Model 4 Total Difference
Tyrrell County Schools	-\$3,125,975.10	-\$2,639,067.97	-\$1,671,823.68	\$25,416.31
Union County Public Schools	\$802,947.32	\$34,928,424.20	\$102,718,914.25	\$221,672,038.30
Vance County Schools	-\$3,309,355.80	\$1,360,520.30	\$10,637,260.69	\$26,915,314.58
Wake County Schools	-\$8,937,292.66	\$129,978,590.90	\$405,935,930.81	\$890,162,961.23
Warren County Schools	-\$2,467,417.28	-\$794,634.60	\$2,528,359.49	\$8,359,273.66
Washington County Schools	-\$2,510,593.83	-\$1,386,921.92	\$845,259.91	\$4,762,107.27
Watauga County Schools	-\$2,420,380.97	\$1,621,172.80	\$9,649,746.63	\$23,737,621.45
Wayne County Public Schools	\$4,440,669.89	\$20,469,876.40	\$52,312,003.26	\$108,185,923.99
Wilkes County Schools	\$526,519.50	\$8,112,067.96	\$23,180,811.16	\$49,622,190.72
Wilson County Schools	\$2,740,968.03	\$12,149,484.60	\$30,839,566.25	\$63,635,369.90
Yadkin County Schools	-\$2,034,713.55	\$2,416,553.30	\$11,259,024.94	\$26,775,060.08
Yancey County Schools	-\$2,594,322.09	-\$614,051.99	\$3,319,767.93	\$10,222,508.54

REFERENCES

1. Learning Policy Institute. 2025. How Money Matters: Education Funding and Student Outcomes. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/how-money-matters-factsheet>
2. Public School Forum of North Carolina. 2026. *Local School Finance Study*. <https://www.ncforum.org/lfs/>
3. NCGA Fiscal Research Division. (2023). *Public School Funding*. <https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/74206>
4. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. 2026. *North Carolina Public Schools Statistical Profile, Table 22*. <https://apps.schools.nc.gov/public/f?p=145:32>
5. Public School Forum of North Carolina. *Leandro v NC: Background and Resources*. <https://www.ncforum.org/leandro/>
6. Leandro v NC. 2021. *Leandro Comprehensive Remedial Plan*. <https://www.ncforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/March-2021-CRP.pdf>
7. EdNC. 2026. *Leandro case decision by NC Supreme Court*. <https://www.ednc.org/4-2-2026-leandro-decision/>
8. North Carolina General Assembly, Program Evaluation Division. 2016. *K-12 education funding flexibility and accountability report*. <https://www.ncleg.gov/Files/ProgramEvaluation/ped/reports/2016/k12funding.html>
9. North Carolina General Assembly. 2023. *Senate Bill 670: Create new weighted student funding model (2023-2024 session)*. <https://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookup/2023/S670>
10. North Carolina General Assembly. 2026. *Proposed Conference Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 257: Current Operations Appropriations Act of 2026 (S257-CCSNExr-2, v78)*. <https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewNewsFile/117/S257-CCSNExr-2%20v78>
11. EdBuild. (n.d.). FundEd: National policy maps. <http://funded.edbuild.org/national#formula-type>
12. Tennessee Department of Education. (n.d.). Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA) Formula. <https://www.tn.gov/education/best-for-all/tnedufunding.html>
13. Magnolia Tribune. 2024. *Mississippi schools to share nearly \$240 million more in education funding this fiscal year*. <https://magnoliatribune.com/2024/07/16/mississippi-schools-to-share-nearly-240-million-more-in-education-funding-this-fiscal-year/>
14. EdBuild. 2026. *FundEd: National Policy Maps*. <http://funded.edbuild.org/national#formula-type>
15. See Appendix A for examples in select states.

16. EdBuild. (n.d.). Funded: National school funding data. Retrieved June 15, 2026, from <http://funded.edbuild.org/national#formula-type>
17. Tennessee Department of Education. (n.d.). *Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA)*. <https://www.tn.gov/education/best-for-all/tnedufunding.html>
18. Tennessee Department of Education. (2025). *TISA guide 2025–26*. https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/tisa-resources/2025-26_TISA_Guide.pdf
19. Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury. (n.d.). *Tennessee school funding dashboard*. <https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrJoiYzZM5ODMwZDctZGVINS00NWNiLWlxNTQyYjhkNWlxMzdkZmU5liwidCI6IjVIMWJiMmQ4LTBmMGUtdNDkwNS1hY2M5LTczNTFmODUwNmZmNiJ9>
20. Bill Track 50. (n.d.). *MS HB42*. <https://www.billtrack50.com/billdetail/1895981>
21. Mississippi Legislature. 2024. *House Bill 4130*. <https://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2024/html/HB/4100-4199/HB4130PS.htm>
22. Mississippi Department of Education. *FY26 Mississippi Student Funding Formula Allocations and FY26 Local Contributions*. <https://mdek12.org/financialservices/allocations/>
23. Mississippi Department of Education. 2026. *Data Explorer: 2025–26 Student Enrollment Data*. <https://newreports.mdek12.org/DataExplorer>.
24. EdFund. (n.d.). *State Education Funding: What We Know So Far*. <https://edfund.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/downloads/State-Education-Funding-NC.pdf>
25. Public School Forum of North Carolina. 2026. *Local School Finance Study*. ncforum.org/lfsf
26. Public School Forum of North Carolina. 2026. *Local School Finance Study*. ncforum.org/lfsf
27. Analysis includes only state and local funding, is adjusted for regional cost differences, and includes all states and the District of Columbia. Education Law Center. 2025. *Making the grade 2025*. <https://edlawcenter.org/research/making-the-grade-2025/>
28. Education Law Center. 2025. *Making the grade 2025*. <https://edlawcenter.org/research/making-the-grade-2025/>
29. Education Law Center. 2025. *Making the grade 2025*. <https://edlawcenter.org/research/making-the-grade-2025/>
30. North Carolina General Statutes § 115C-105.25 https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_115C/GS_115C-105.25.pdf

31. EdFund. (n.d.). State education funding: What We Know So Far. <https://edfund.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/downloads/State-Education-Funding-NC.pdf>
32. Learning Policy Institute. 2025. *How money matters for schools*. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/how-money-matters-factsheet>
33. EdFund. (n.d.). State education funding: What We Know So Far. <https://edfund.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/downloads/State-Education-Funding-NC.pdf>
34. Calculated based on data from NCDPI Statistical Profile, dividing total ADM by pupils in membership being served by Exceptional Children Programs. Public School Forum of NC. 2026. *July 24 Policy Updates*. <https://www.ncforum.org/july-24-policy-updates/2026/>
35. NCDPI. 2024. *Report to the General Assembly: Weighted Funding for Exceptional Children Students*. <https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/84848>
36. WFAE. 2025. *English learner headcount drops statewide after changes in NC criteria*. <https://www.wfae.org/education/2025-12-04/english-learner-headcount-drops-statewide-after-changes-in-nc-criteria>
37. Bellwether. 2024. *Splitting the bill*. https://bellwether.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/SplittingtheBill_13_Bellwether_March2024.pdf
38. Bellwether. 2024. *Splitting the bill*. https://bellwether.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/SplittingtheBill_13_Bellwether_March2024.pdf
39. NCDPI. (n.d.). *AIG state budget*. <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/students-families/enhanced-opportunities/advanced-learning-and-gifted-education/academically-or-intellectually-gifted/aig-state-budget>
40. EdNC. 2026. *NC is building momentum around career and technical education, and these student stories show it*. <https://www.ednc.org/nc-is-building-momentum-around-career-and-technical-education-and-these-student-stories-show-it/>
41. NCDPI. 2026. *North Carolina CTE students earn record-breaking 382,964 industry credentials in 2024-2025*. <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/news/press-releases/2026/02/04/north-carolina-cte-students-earn-record-breaking-382964-industry-credentials-2024-2025>
42. NCDPI. 2026. *2024-2025 credential report*. <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/2024-2025-credential-report/open>
43. NCDPI. 2026. *2024-2025 credential report*. <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/2024-2025-credential-report/open>
44. Urban Institute. 2023. *Small and sparse: Defining rural school districts for K-12 funding*. <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/Small%20and%20Sparse-Defining%20Rural%20School%20Districts%20for%20K%E2%80%9312%20Funding.pdf>

45. Public School Forum of North Carolina. 2026. *Local School Finance Study*. <http://ncforum.org/lfs>
46. Baker, B. D., Weber, M., Srikanth, A., Kim, R., & Atzbi, M. (2018). *The real shame of the nation: The causes and consequences of interstate inequity in public school investments*.
<https://www.shankerinstitute.org/sites/default/files/The%20Real%20Shame%20of%20the%20Nation.pdf>
47. Learning Policy Institute. 2017. *Where have all the teachers gone?* <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/press-release/where-have-all-teachers-gone>
48. Model 1 would cost an additional \$733K annually, the closest the modeling could get to a revenue-neutral approach using the scenario weights presented in this report.
49. Leandro v NC. 2021. Leandro Comprehensive Remedial Plan. <https://www.ncforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/March-2021-CRP.pdf>
50. EdLaw Center. 2025. *Making the grade 2025*. <https://edlawcenter.org/research/making-the-grade-2025/>
51. Every Child Alabama. (n.d.). *The RAISE Act*. <https://everychildalabama.org/the-raise-act/>
52. A+ Education Partnership. 2025. Budget Watch FY2026. <https://aplusala.org/blog/2025/02/06/budget-watch-fy-2026/>
53. Florida Department of Education. 2025. *Funding for Florida School Districts 2025-26*.
<https://www.fldoe.org/file/7507/Fefpdist.pdf>
54. Mississippi Department of Education. 2024. *Mississippi Student Funding Formula*.
[fy25 mississippi student formula funding 07 09 24 0.pdf](https://www.mde.k12.ms.us/Portals/0/fy25_mississippi_student_formula_funding_07_09_24_0.pdf)
55. South Carolina Department of Education. 2025. Fiscal Year 2025-26 Funding Manual.
<https://ed.sc.gov/finance/financial-services/manual-handbooks-and-guidelines/funding-manuals/fiscal-year-2025-2026-funding-manual/>
56. Tennessee Department of Education. 2025. TISA Guide 2025-26 School Year.
https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/tisa-resources/2025-26_TISA_Guide.pdf
57. Alabama State Legislature. 2025. SB305.
<https://alison.legislature.state.al.us/files/pdf/SearchableInstruments/2025RS/SB305-enr.pdf>
58. Mississippi Legislature. 2025. HB1768. <https://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2025/html/HB/1700-1799/HB1768PS.htm>