



# FACTS & FIGURES

EDUCATION IN NORTH CAROLINA

2023

# BEST NC's Vision:

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



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



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# Navigating *Facts & Figures: Education in North Carolina*



## Children & Students

Pages 4-16

Who goes to school in North Carolina? Where do they go to school? How has this changed over time?



## Educators

Pages 17-35

Who is teaching in North Carolina, pre-k through postsecondary? How do teachers enter the profession? How are educators compensated?



## Schools & Programs

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How many schools are in North Carolina? Where do students go to school from pre-k to postsecondary? What schooling options do students have?



## Finance

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How is education paid for in North Carolina? How is funding distributed? Are there funding inequities?



## Achievement

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How are students performing on state and national assessments? At what rate do North Carolina students graduate from high school and postsecondary programs? How are students performing in higher education?

## NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading

The Pathways icon indicates whole-child Measures of Success that put children on a pathway to grade-level reading. For more information visit: [buildthefoundation.org/initiative/pathways-to-grade-level-reading](https://buildthefoundation.org/initiative/pathways-to-grade-level-reading)



## myFutureNC

The myFutureNC icon indicates key education performance measures directly tied to North Carolina's education-to-workforce continuum and the state goal of increasing educational attainment to 2 million by 2030. For more information visit: [myfuturenc.org](https://myfuturenc.org)

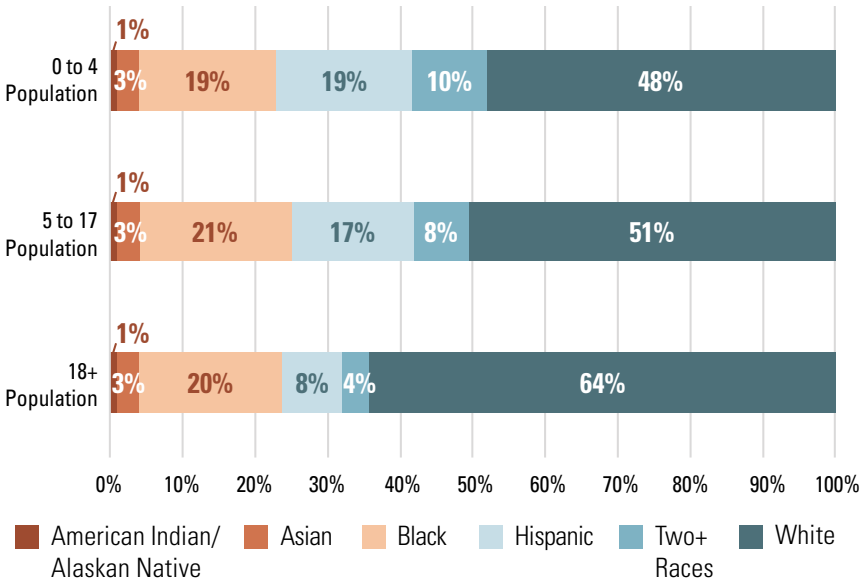


**NOTE:** Many key education metrics were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and related school closures. Areas particularly affected include student enrollment and attendance, as well as student achievement. Because we do not know the full impact of the pandemic or the degree to which pandemic-related shifts will persist, **we encourage the use of caution when interpreting data in longitudinal trends** and have included the icon to the left to indicate data that may be impacted by the pandemic.



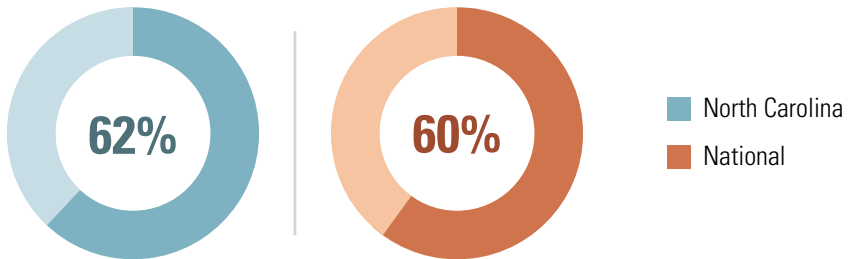
# SECTION 1: Children & Students

## North Carolina Population, by Age and Race/Ethnicity (2021)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2021), American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table S0201

## Children Ages Three and Four Not in School (2021) 🌟



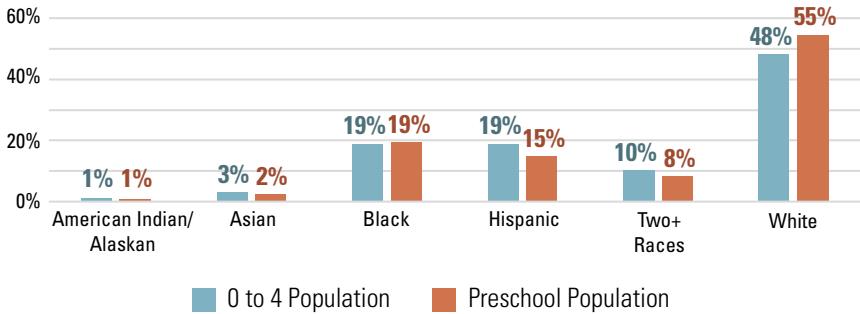
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2021), American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table B14003

# 70%

In 2021, 70% of children in the United States and 70% of children in North Carolina lived in households where all parents were in the labor force.

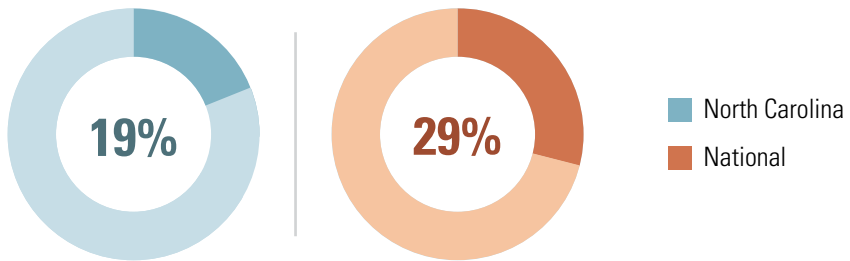


## North Carolina Preschool Enrollment and 0 to 4 Population, by Race/Ethnicity (2021)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2021), American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table S0201

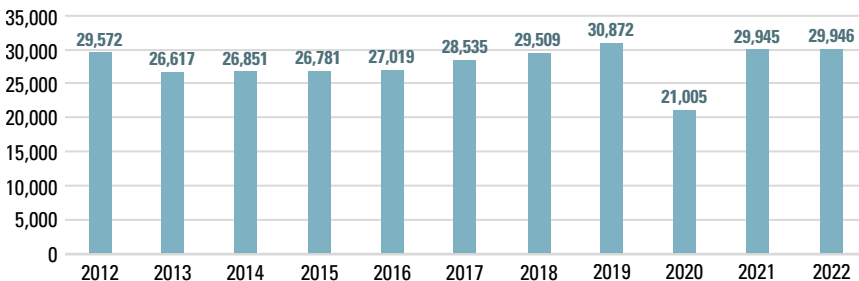
## Enrollment in State Pre-K of Children Age Four (2020-21)



Note: 50% of eligible 4-year-olds in North Carolina are participating in NC Pre-K. Enrollment data for eligible children are not available at the national level.

Source: NIEER 2021 State of Preschool Report; myFutureNC NC Pre-K Enrollment

## North Carolina Pre-K Seats (2012 to 2022)



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



## North Carolina Pre-K (NC Pre-K)

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

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

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



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

The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) encourages states to enroll 75% of eligible children in state pre-k programs. Approximately 36% of North Carolina's counties met NIEER's enrollment targets in 2021-22.

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

## North Carolina Subsidized Child Care

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

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

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

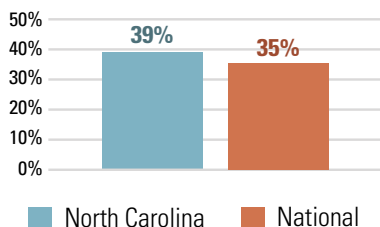
**98,935  
CHILDREN**  
benefited from the Child  
Care Subsidy Program.

In November 2022, there were 98,935 children participating in the Subsidized Child Care Program, while another 5,979 eligible children were on the waiting list.

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

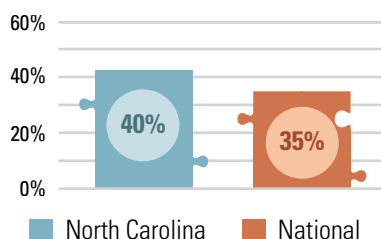


## Children Under 18 Living At or Below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line (2021)



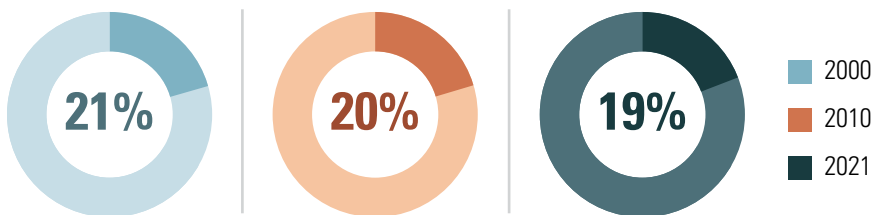
**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Detailed Tables for Poverty, POV11: Poverty Status by State, 2021

## Children Ages Nine to 35 Months Receiving Developmental Screening (2020-21)



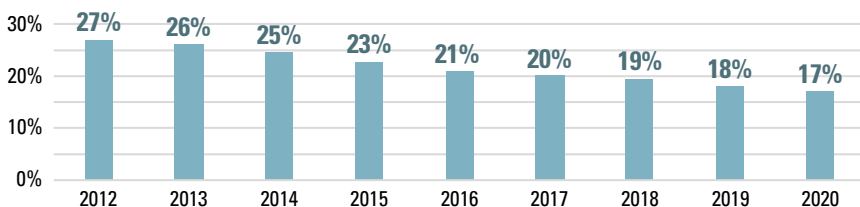
**Source:** National Survey of Children's Health, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration

## School-Age Population as a Percentage of State Population (2000, 2010, and 2021)



**Source:** 2000 Census Profile of General Demographic Characteristics; 2010 Census American Community Survey; 2021 Census American Community Survey

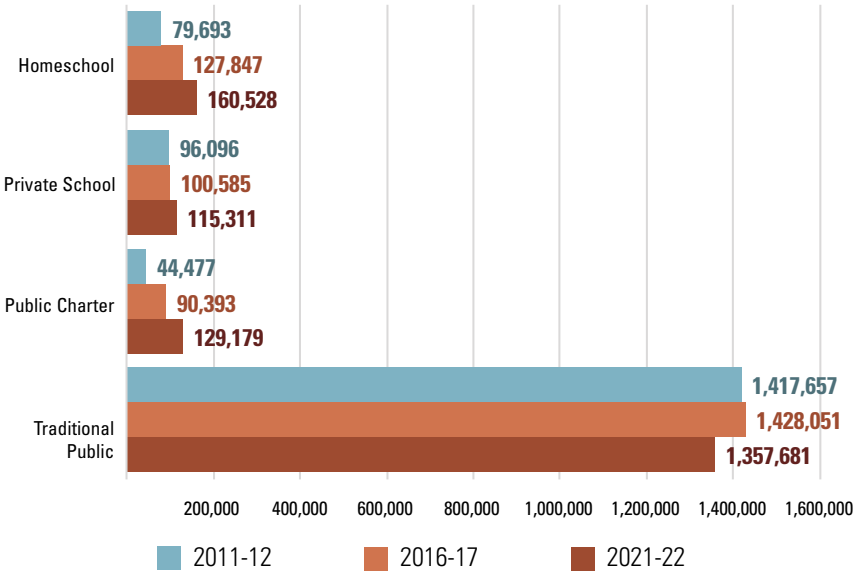
## Children Living in Households with Food Insecurity (2012 to 2020)



**Source:** NC Department of Health and Human Services Early Childhood Data Dashboard; Feeding America

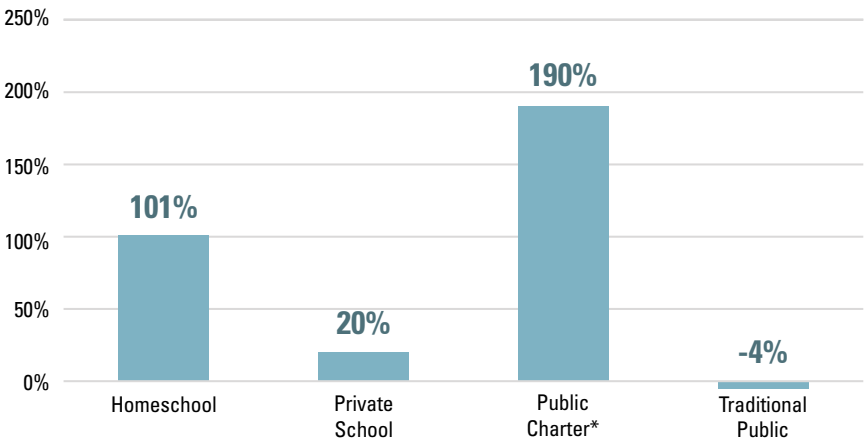


### K-12 Enrollment, by School Type (2011-12 to 2021-22)



Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 1 & 3; Private School Annual Report; Homeschool Annual Report

### 10-Year Percentage Change in K-12 Enrollment, by School Type (2011-12 to 2021-22)



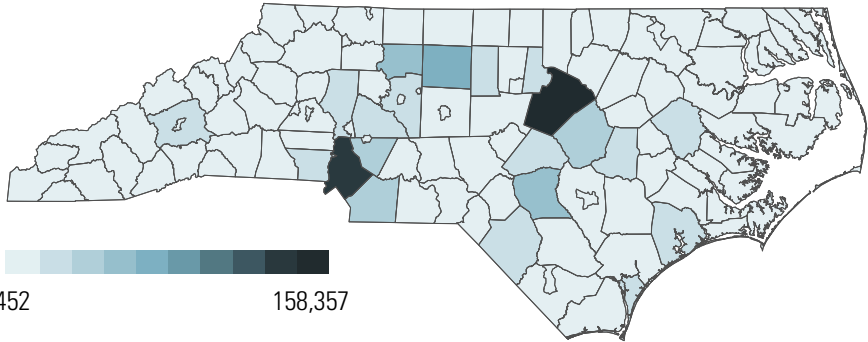
\*In 2012, the 100-school cap on the number of charter schools in North Carolina was lifted.

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 1 & 3; Private Schools Annual Report; Homeschool Annual Report





## K-12 Traditional Public School Enrollment, by District (2022-23) 🌟



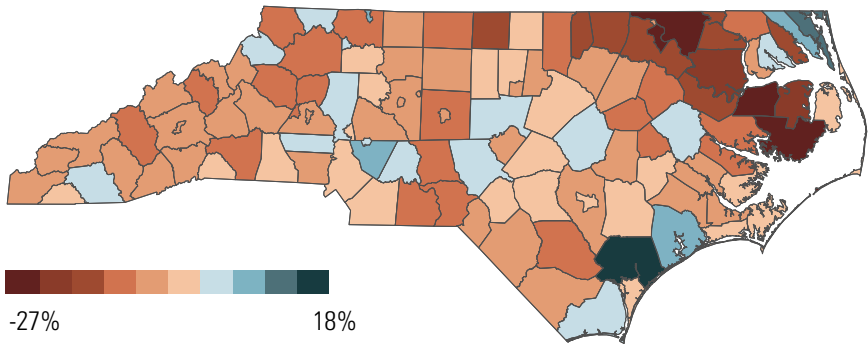
Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 10



In 2022-23, enrollment in K-12 traditional public school districts ranged from **471** in Hyde County Schools to **158,659** in Wake County Public School System, with a median of **5,390** students.

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 10

## Five-Year Percentage Change in K-12 Traditional Public School Enrollment, by District (2017-18 to 2022-23) 🌟



Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 10

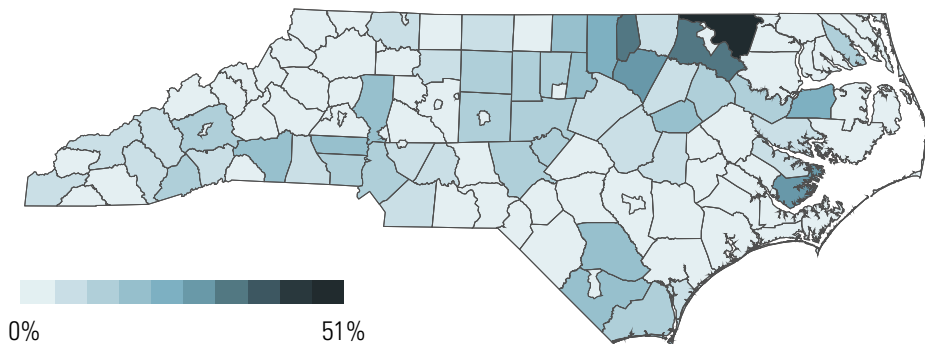
# 3.8%

Overall enrollment in K-12 traditional public schools decreased by **3.8%** between 2017-18 and 2022-23, with **95 of 115** districts experiencing a decline. 🌟

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 10

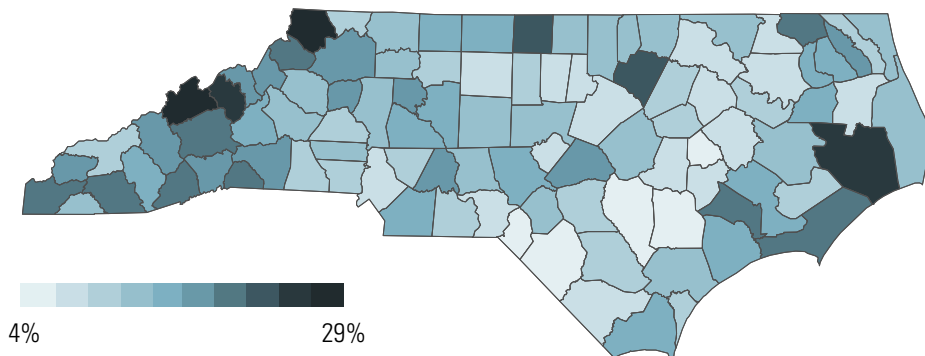


## Public Charter School Enrollment as a Percentage of Total K-12 Public School Enrollment, by District (2022-23) 🌟



Source: DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 10 and 37

## Homeschool Enrollment as a Percentage of K-12 Traditional Public School Enrollment, by County (2021-22) 🌟

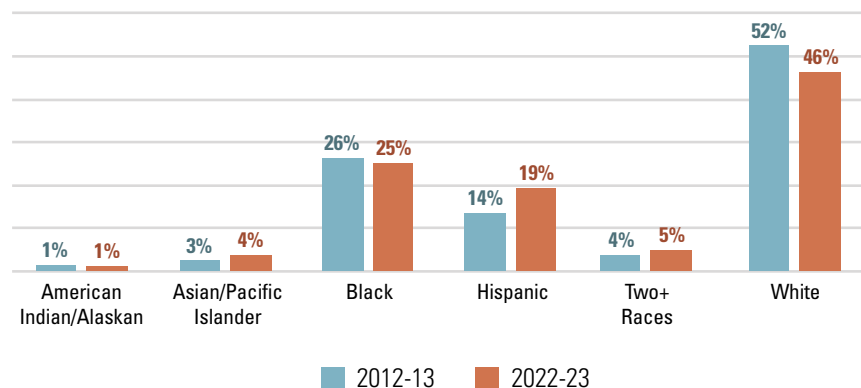


Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 10; Homeschool Annual Report

Between 2016-17 and 2021-22, the number of charter school students increased by **43%** and the number of homeschool students increased by **26%**. In 2021-22, charter and homeschool students represented **7%** and **9%** of the total K-12 student population, respectively. 🌟

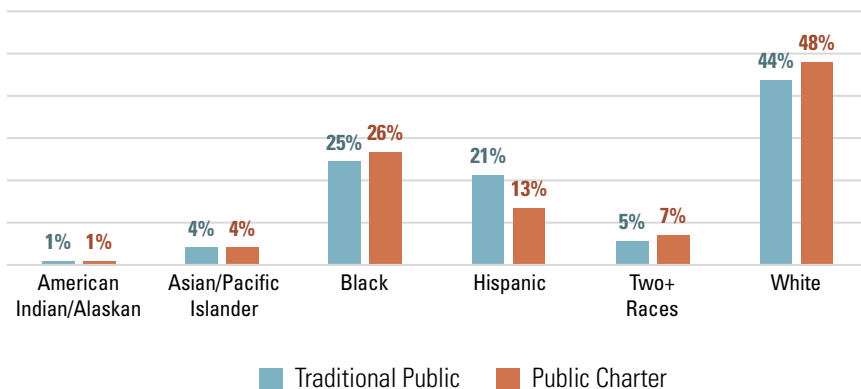


## K-12 Public School Enrollment, by Race/Ethnicity (2012-13 and 2022-23)



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

## K-12 Public School Enrollment, by School Type and Race/Ethnicity (2022-23)



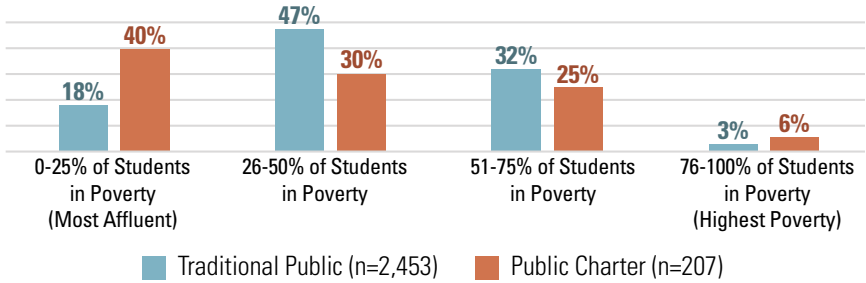
Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 10 and 37

From 2013 to 2023, the number of Hispanic and Asian students in K-12 public schools increased by 51% and 59%, respectively, while at the same time, the number of White students decreased by 10% and the number of Black students stayed about the same.

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



## Number of K-12 Public Schools, by Poverty Level and School Type (2021-22)



Source: NC DPI Data & Reports: Economically Disadvantaged Students

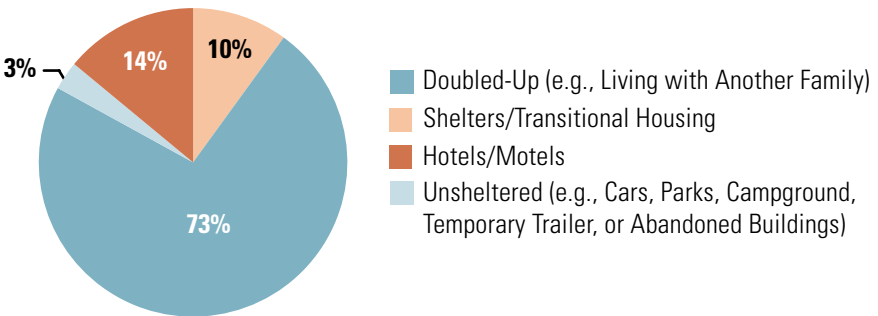


During the 2019-20 school year, **27,044** North Carolina students experienced homelessness, representing **1.8%** of all students in K-12 public schools.

Source: DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 1 and 3; US Department of Education – EdFacts Homeless Enrolled Data Set



## Homeless Youth, by Primary Nighttime Residence (2020)



Source: DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 1 and 3; US Department of Education - EdFacts Homeless Enrolled Data Set

**18%** of K-12 traditional public schools had fewer than 25% economically disadvantaged students (EDS) in 2021-22, while **40%** of charter schools had fewer than 25% EDS.

Source: NC DPI Data & Reports: Economically Disadvantaged Students



## SPOTLIGHT ON: Measuring Economic Disadvantage

The federal *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015* requires states to disaggregate student data by subgroups for accountability reporting, including by race/ethnicity, students with disabilities, and economic disadvantage. Historically, many states and municipalities used Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) eligibility to identify which students came from low-income households.

However, to be identified as FRPL-eligible, a child's parent or guardian must fill out an application certifying that their income falls below a specific threshold (185% of the federal poverty line for reduced price meals; 130% for free meals) and requesting that their child receive free or reduced-price meals at school. For a variety of reasons, families with qualifying income levels do not always fill out FRPL applications and these self-reported data fail to capture all low-income students.

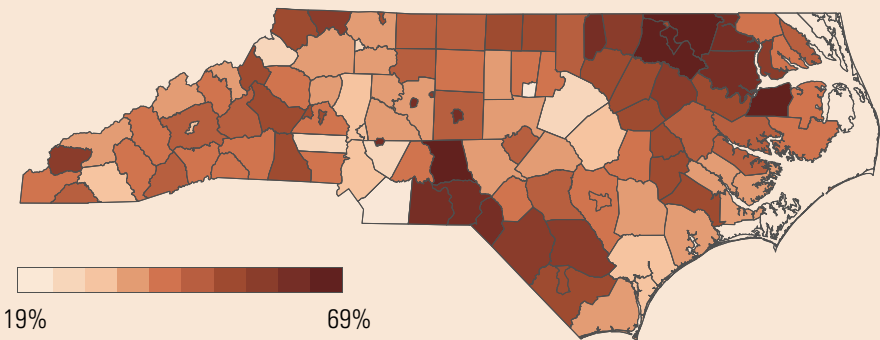
Additionally, as part of the federal *Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010*, schools with high percentages of low-income students began offering free school meals to all students without collecting FRPL applications. Since access to meals was offered to everyone, these schools saw sharp declines in the number of FRPL applications submitted, further undermining FRPL as an accurate measure of the number of low-income students.

As a result, in 2016-17, North Carolina began using "Economically Disadvantaged Students" (EDS) as a new measure for the number of low-income students. EDS is a more consistent measure that includes students who:

- Participate in federal programs aimed at low-income families, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and Free or Reduced-Price Lunch;
- Are categorically eligible, which includes homeless and migrant students, as well as those in foster care; and/or
- Are identified by their school or district using a method that certifies family income levels but is not linked to FRPL.

In North Carolina school districts, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students ranges from 19% in Union County Public Schools to 69% in Halifax County Schools.

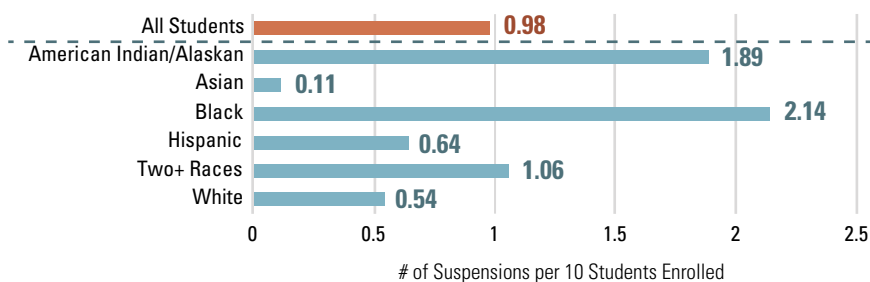
**Figure 1: Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students in K-12 Traditional Public School Districts (2021-22)**



**Source:** NC DPI: *Economically Disadvantaged Status*; NC DPI: *EDS Data Collection*; US Department of Agriculture: *Child Nutrition Programs Income Eligibility Guidelines 2022-23*; Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: *Community Eligibility Provision*

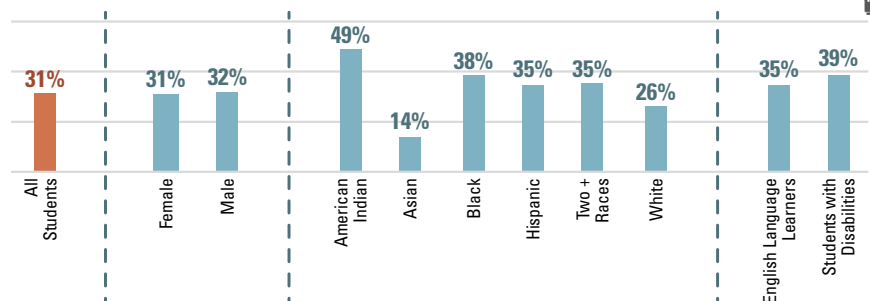


## Short-Term Suspension Rates in K-12 Public Schools, by Race/Ethnicity (2019-20)



Source: NC DPI 2019-20 Consolidated Discipline Report

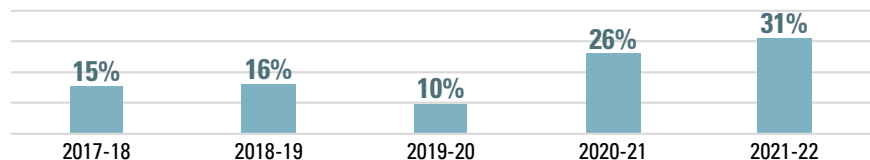
## Chronic Absenteeism\* in K-12 Traditional Public Schools, by Student Subgroup (2021-22)



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

Source: NC DPI School Report Cards - State Highlights Report

## Chronic Absenteeism\* in K-12 Traditional Public Schools (2017-18 to 2021-22)



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

Source: NC DPI School Report Cards - State Highlights Report



## North Carolina Community College System Full-Time Equivalent Enrollment (Fall 2022)



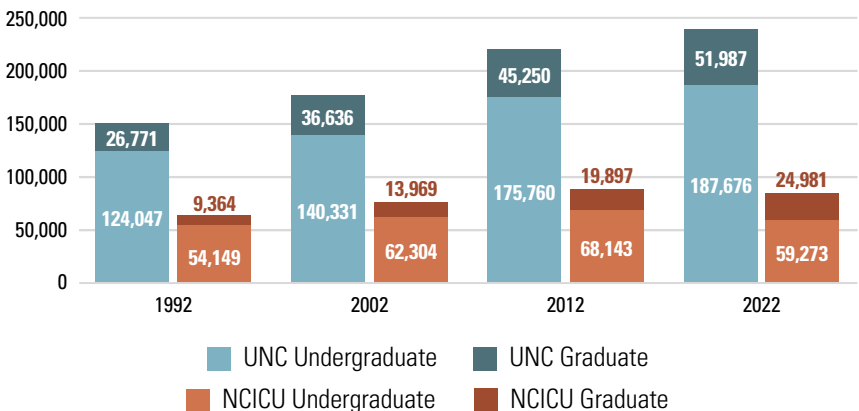
Fall Curriculum Enrollment	
Career and Technical Education	76,332
Transfer and General Education	86,902
Special Credit	8,481
<b>Total Curriculum Unduplicated Enrollment</b>	<b>171,715</b>

Fall Continuing Education Enrollment	
Basic Skills	9,673
Workforce Development	38,421
<b>Total Continuing Education Unduplicated Enrollment</b>	<b>48,094</b>

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

**Source:** [North Carolina Community College System Data Dashboard](#)

## UNC System and North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities Enrollment (1992-2022)

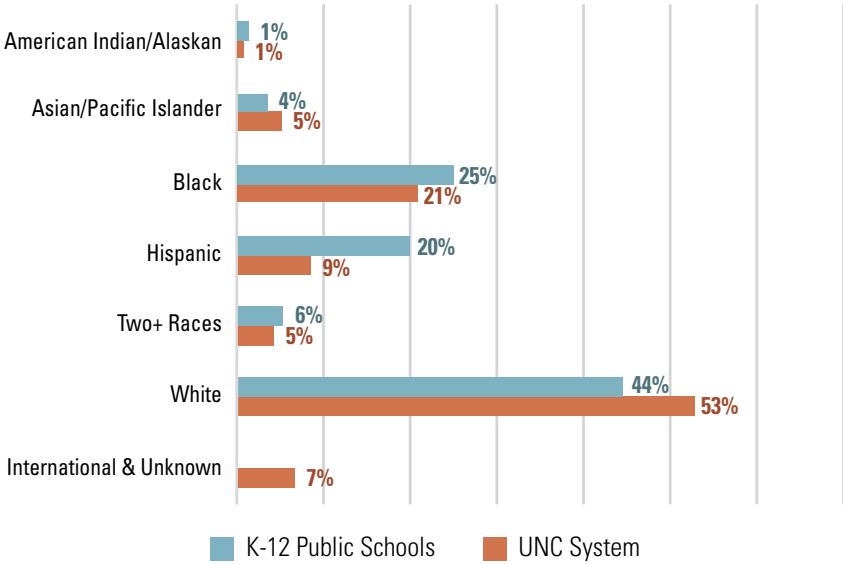


**Source:** [UNC System \(Data Request\)](#); [NCICU \(Data Request\)](#)



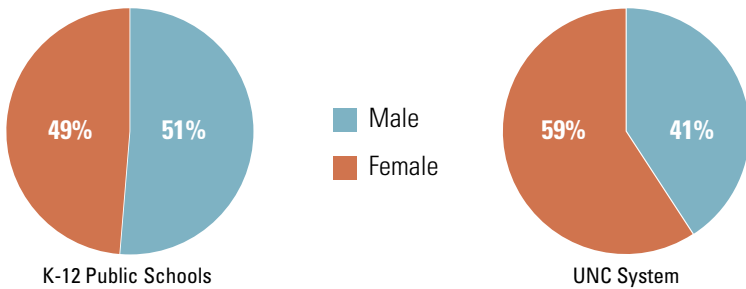
SECTION 1: Children & Students

### K-12 Public School (2022-23) vs. UNC System (Fall 2022) Enrollment, by Race/Ethnicity



Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 10 & 37; UNC InfoCenter

### K-12 Traditional Public School (2022-23) vs. UNC System (Fall 2022) Enrollment, by Gender



Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 10; UNC InfoCenter

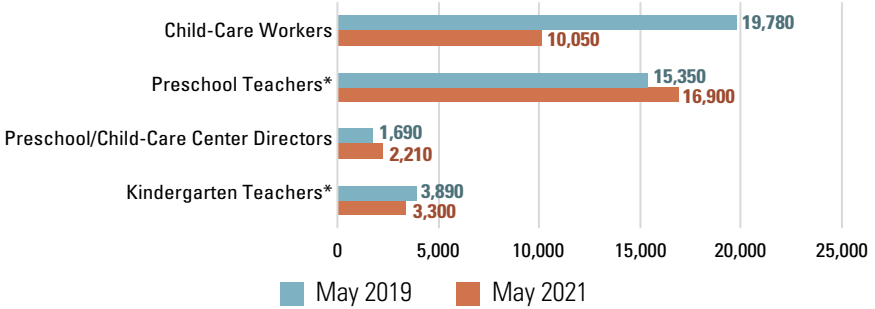
In 2022-23, 53% of UNC System students were White, while only 44% of K-12 public school students were White. In contrast, Hispanic students accounted for 20% of the K-12 student population, but only 9% of the UNC System enrollment.





# SECTION 2: Educators

## Early Childhood Educators, by Occupation (2019 and 2021)



\*Excludes special education.

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

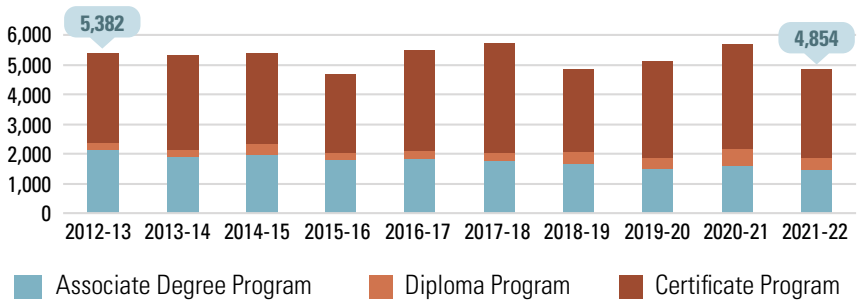
**Source:** U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)

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

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

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

## Early Childhood Education Graduates at North Carolina Community Colleges, by Program Type (2012-13 to 2021-22)

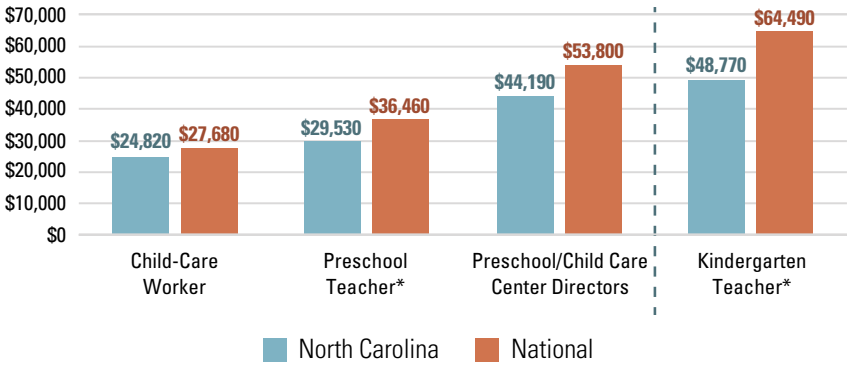


**Source:** North Carolina Community College System (Data Request)



## SECTION 2: Educators

### Median Early Childhood Education Wages, by Occupation (May 2021)

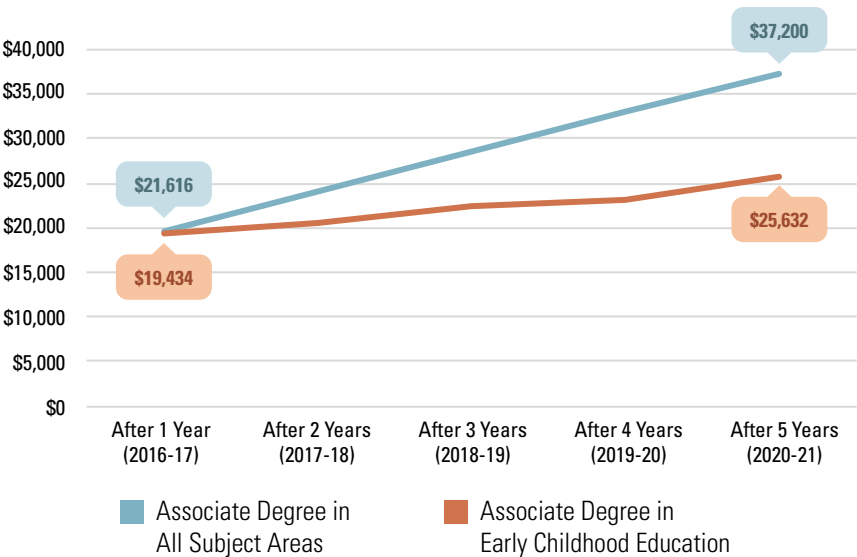


\*Excludes special education.

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

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

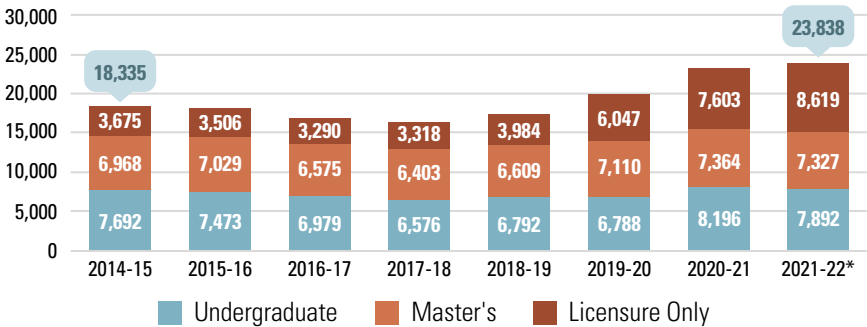
### Average Wages for North Carolina Community College System Graduates, by Program Area and Over Time (2015-16 Graduating Class)



**Source:** NC TOWER



## Public and Independent Educator Preparation Enrollment, by Degree Type (2014-15 to 2021-22)

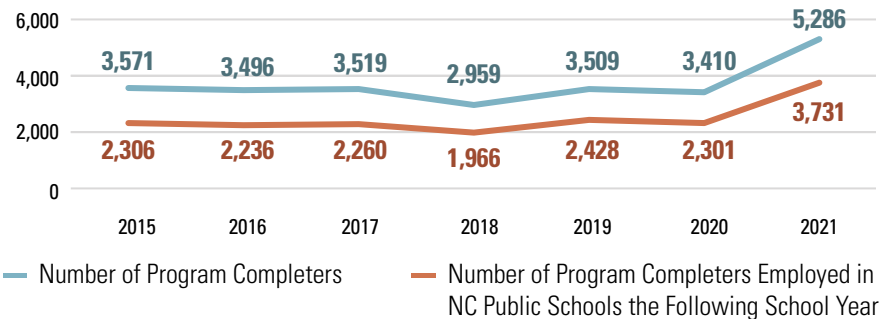


\*2021-22 enrollment includes an estimated number of summer enrollees based upon enrollment figures from the past three years.

**Note:** Enrollment includes those pursuing degrees in student support fields (e.g. guidance counselor) and school administration.

**Source:** NC DPI (Data Request)

## Public and Independent Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Completion, by In-State Public School Employment Status (2015 to 2021)



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

**Source:** NC DPI (Data Request)

# 71%

The percentage of North Carolina educator preparation program completers who were employed in North Carolina public schools the following year rose from 65% in 2015-16 to 71% in 2021-22.

**Source:** NC DPI (Data Request)



## SPOTLIGHT ON:

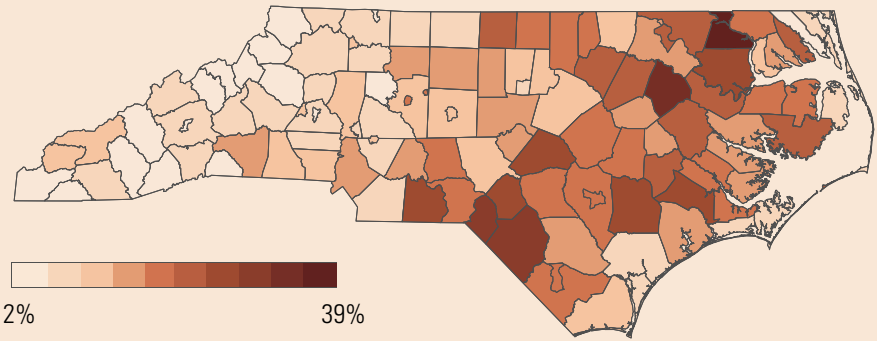
## Alternative Routes to Teacher Licensure

In North Carolina, teachers can become licensed through a traditional pathway\* or through what is called an “alternative” route, which requires candidates to hold a bachelor’s degree but allows them work full-time as a teacher for a 1-year period or for up to three years if they are simultaneously completing their educator training. The three types of alternative licensure routes are residency, emergency, and permit to teach.

Alternative licensure pathways are an important and growing part of the teacher pipeline in North Carolina and help many districts fill critical vacancies. The percentage of newly hired teachers licensed through an alternative pathway increased from 22% in 2015 to 42% in 2022 (see page 22).

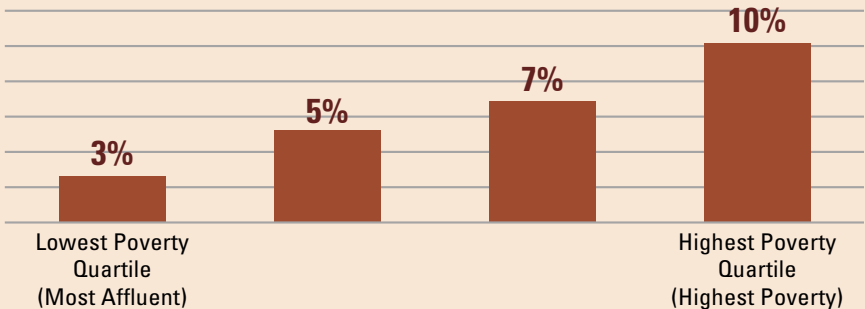
The percentage of teachers who entered the profession via an alternative licensure pathway varies widely across North Carolina school districts – from 2% in Mitchell County Schools to 39% in Hertford County Schools, with a median of 13%.

**Figure 1: Percentage of Currently Employed Teachers who Entered on an Alternative\*\* License in Traditional Public Schools, by District (2021-22)**



Alternatively licensed teachers are disproportionately employed in schools with high levels of poverty.

**Figure 2: Percentage of Alternative\*\* License Teachers, by School Poverty Quartile (2021-22)**



\*Under the traditional preparation route, a candidate must graduate from a degree granting Educator Preparation Program (EPP) and complete student teaching prior to gaining employment. They must also complete required testing during their first three years of teaching.

\*\*Alternative license teachers include those with a residency license, emergency license, or a permit to teach.

## Residency License Pathway

Among alternative routes, the Residency license pathway is the only option that provides a path to becoming a career educator. Teachers working on a Residency license must be simultaneously employed by a school district and enrolled in an EPP completing coursework aligned with their teaching area. Upon completion of their EPP coursework and required testing, Residency license holders may convert to an Initial Professional License (if less than two years of teaching experience) or a Continuing Professional License, which is the license that career educators hold.

<b>Required Education</b>	Bachelor's degree and 24 hours of coursework in licensure area
<b>Required Professional Development from District</b>	10 days during first year of employment
<b>License Duration</b>	1 year; can be renewed 2 times

Prior to entering the profession, residency license teachers are, generally, college-educated professionals working in another field. Accordingly, they enter the profession somewhat later than those entering via the traditional route.

**Median Age of Newly  
Hired Teachers in the  
Traditional Pathway (2021-22):**

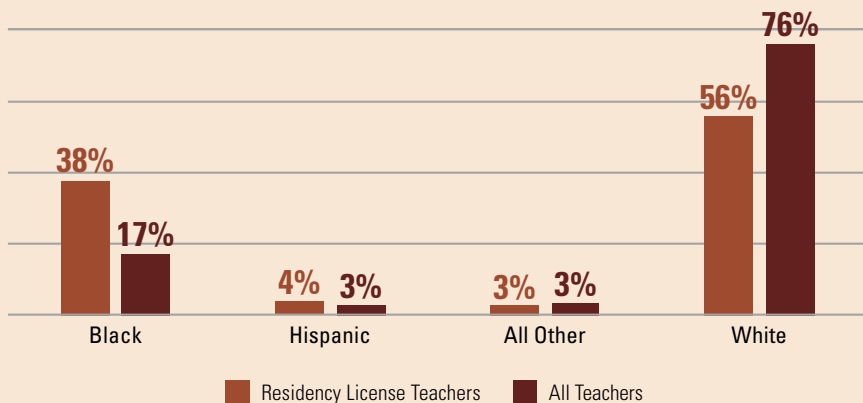
**25 Years Old**

**Median Age of Newly  
Hired Teachers in the  
Residency Pathway (2021-22):**

**31 Years Old**

The residency license pathway is more diverse than the existing teacher workforce. For instance, in 2021-22, 38% of teachers working on a residency license were Black. Meanwhile, Black teachers make up 17% of the existing teacher workforce.

**Figure 3: Distribution of Residency License Teachers and the Existing Teacher Workforce in K-12 Public Schools, by Race/Ethnicity (2021-22)**

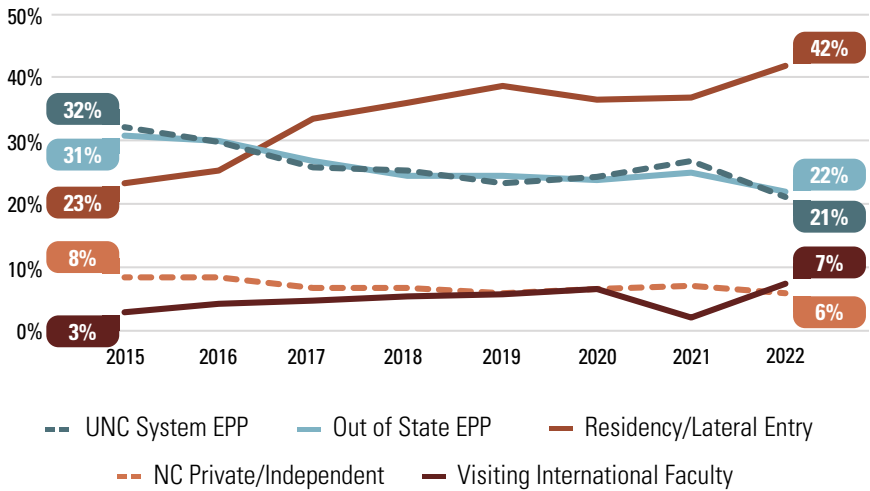


**Source:** NC State Board of Education Policy Manual; NC DPI (Data Request)



## SECTION 2: Educators

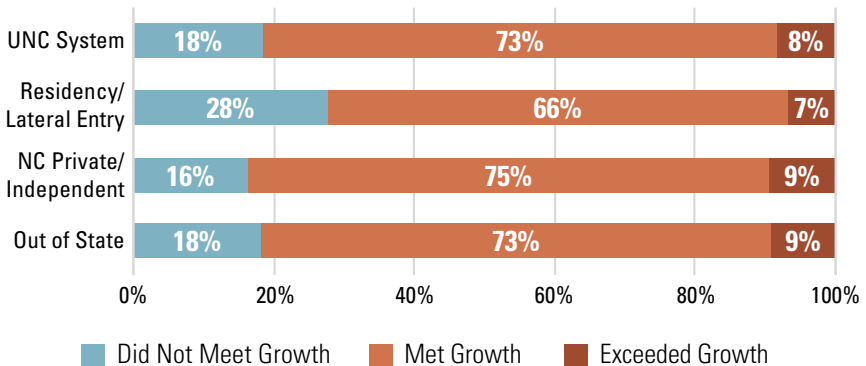
### Distribution of Preparation Routes for Newly Hired K-12 Public School Teachers (2015 to 2022)\*



\*Beginning in 2019-20, the route for alternate certification changed from lateral entry to residency licenses. New candidates pursuing alternate certification could begin teaching with a residency license, or as a first step toward residency, the candidate could teach under an emergency license. Among those teaching with an emergency license, the data do not distinguish those on the way to residency from others. In the chart above, for the purpose of comparison with prior years, we add emergency licenses to residency licenses beginning in 2019-20.

Source: NC DPI (Data Request)

### Distribution of EVAAS Scores for First Year Teachers, by Preparation Route (2018 to 2021\*)



\*EVAAS scores are from the 2018-19, 2020-21, and 2021-22 school years.

Source: NC DPI (Data Request)



## Trends in Classroom Teacher Allotment Ratios\* for North Carolina Public Schools (2004-05 to 2022-23)

Grade	2004-05 to 2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18 to 2022-23
K**	1:18	-	-	1:19	1:18	-	-	-
1**	1:18	1:17	-	1:18	1:17	-	1:16	-
2-3**	1:18	1:17	-	1:18	1:17	-	-	-
4-6	1:21	-	-	1:24	-	-	-	-
7-8	1:21	-	-	1:23	-	-	-	-
9	1:24.5	-	-	1:26.5	-	-	-	-
10-12	1:26.64	-	-	1:29	-	-	-	-

— No Change    ■ Class Size Decrease    ■ Class Size Increase

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

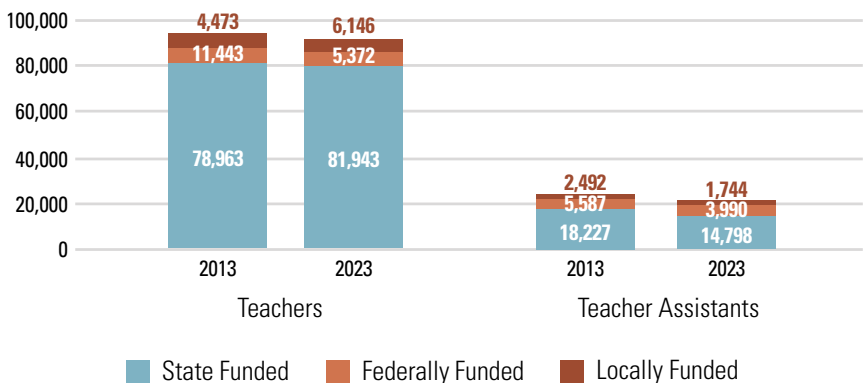
\*\*Maximum average class size, as required by state law.

Source: NC DPI Allotment Policy Manual 2022-23



Beginning in 2009-10 and ending in 2013-14, school districts were required to comply with budget reversions triggered by the economic recession. Districts were given flexibility in determining how to make the budget reversions, which in 2013-14 resulted in a 'truing up' of the ratios to reflect average actual practice from previous years.

## K-12 Traditional Public School Teachers and Teacher Assistants, by Funding Source (2012-13 and 2022-23)

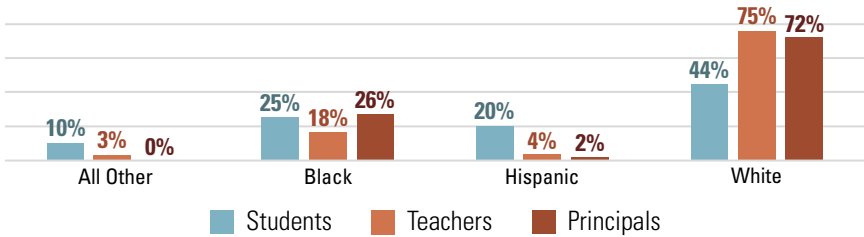


Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 16



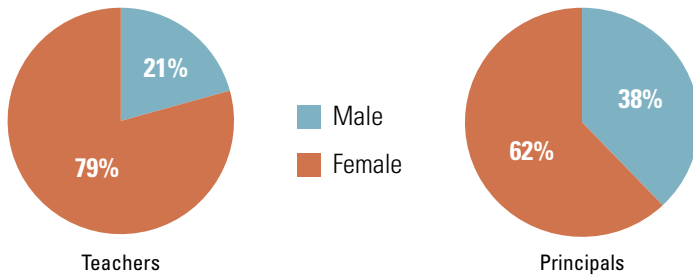
## SECTION 2: Educators

### Distribution of K-12 Public School Students, Teachers, and Principals, by Race/Ethnicity (2021-22)



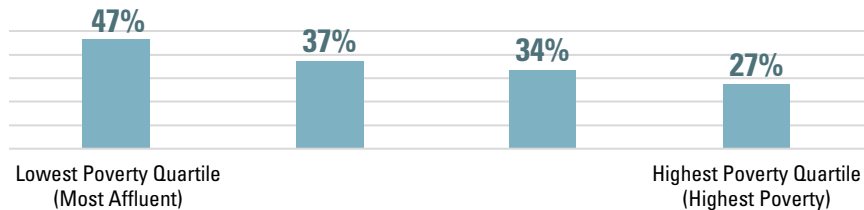
Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 10, 16, 16.1, and 37; NC DPI (Data Request)

### K-12 Traditional Public School Principals and Teachers, by Gender (2021-22)



Source: DPI Statistical Profile, Table 16

### Percentage of Principals Who Have Led Their Current K-12 Traditional Public School for at Least 5 Years, by School Poverty Quartile (2021-22)



Source: NC DPI (Data Request)

In 2022-23, 75% of K-12 teachers are White, while 44% of K-12 public school students are White.



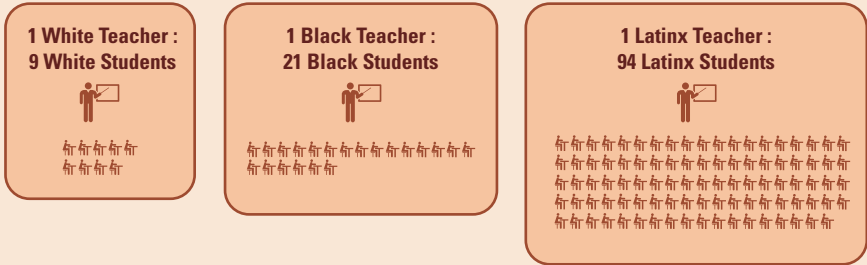


## SPOTLIGHT ON:

# Demographics of the North Carolina Educator Pipeline

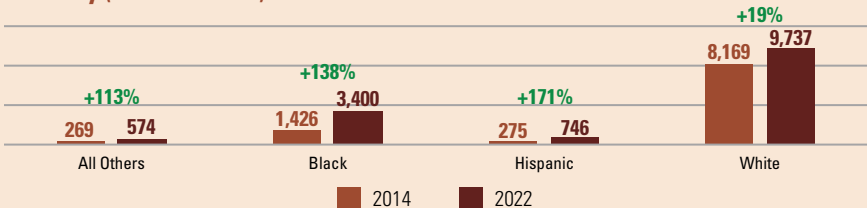
In North Carolina and across the country, the teaching workforce does not reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of public school students. Research shows that having access to a diverse set of teachers improves the achievement of all students.

**Figure 1: Average Student-Teacher Ratios in K-12 Public Schools, by Race/Ethnicity (2021-22)**



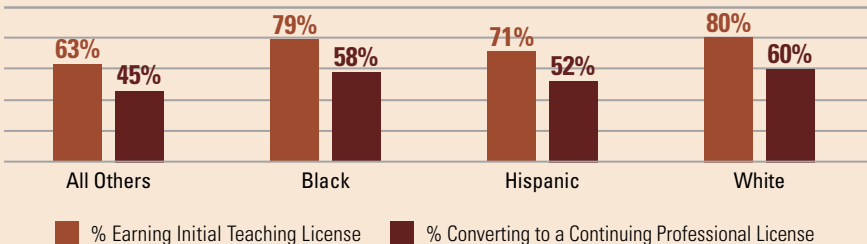
Trends in educator preparation program (EPP) enrollment in North Carolina since 2015 show that the makeup of newly prepared teachers is becoming more diverse. One significant driver of this improved diversity is that the Residency pipeline is preparing a higher percentage of Black teachers (38% in 2021-22; see page 20 for more detail).

**Figure 2: North Carolina Educator Preparation Program Enrollment, by Race/Ethnicity (2014 and 2022)**



While EPP enrollment is increasing, teacher candidates of color are less likely to obtain their initial teaching license and less likely to convert to a Continuing Professional License, which is the license that career educators hold.

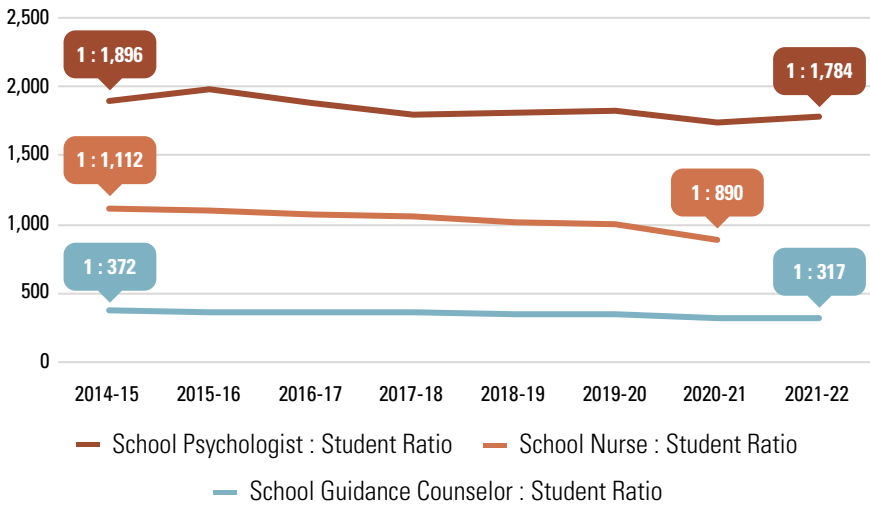
**Figure 3: Percentage of North Carolina EPP Candidates Obtaining an Initial Teaching License and Converting to a Continuing Professional License, by Race/Ethnicity (2015 to 2019 Graduates)**



**Source:** NC DPI Educator Preparation Program Dashboard; DPI Statistical Profile; NC DPI (Data Request)



## Ratio of K-12 Public School Guidance Counselors, Nurses\*, and Psychologists to Students (2014-15 to 2021-22)



**Note:** Data on school nurses is not available for the 2021-22 school year.

**Source:** NC DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 1 & 16; NC DHHS Division of Public Health Annual School Health Services Report

The National Association of School Psychologists recommends a ratio of

**1 : 500**

The National Association of School Nurses recommends a ratio of

**1 : School**

The American School Counselor Association recommends a ratio of

**1 : 250**

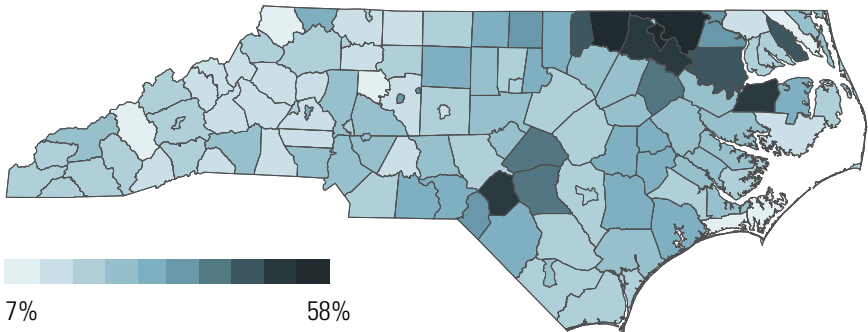
**Sources:** American School Counselor Association - *School Counselors Matter*; National Association of School Nurses - *School Nurse Workload: Staffing for Safe Care*; National Association of School Psychologists - *Shortage of School Psychologists*





## SECTION 2: Educators

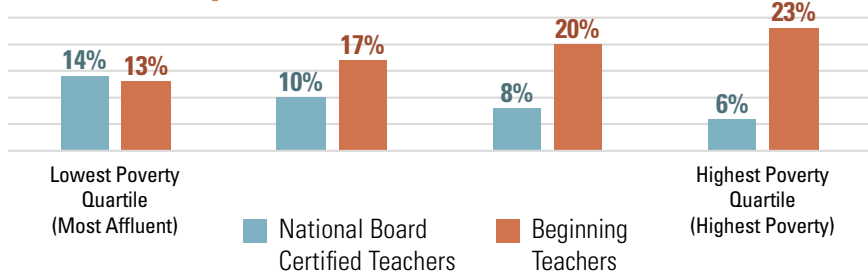
### Percentage of Teachers Not Fully Licensed, By District (2021-22)



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

**Source:** NC DPI (Data Request)

### Percentage of Beginning Teachers\* and National Board-Certified Teachers in K-12 Traditional Public Schools, by School Poverty Quartile\*\* (2020-21)



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

\*\*Schools were sorted by their percentage of economically disadvantaged students (EDS) and grouped into quartiles such that the number of schools was equal across each quartile. The lowest poverty quartile includes schools with 0-32% EDS, while the highest poverty quartile includes schools with 56-90% EDS.

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

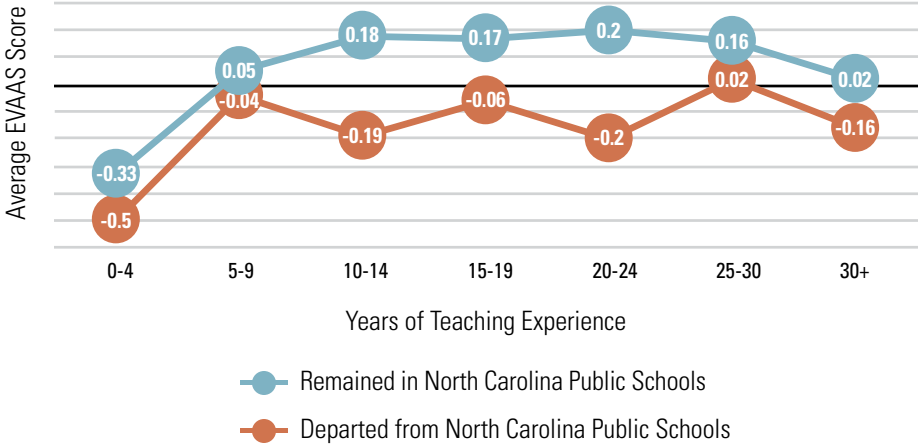
# 10%

of North Carolina teachers in traditional public schools were National Board Certified and teaching in the area of their certification in 2020-21.

**Source:** NC DPI National Board Certification Annual Report



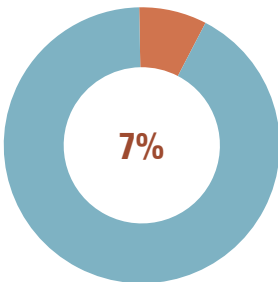
## Average EVAAS Scores\* of K-12 Teachers Who Remained In and Departed From Public Schools, by Years of Experience (2021-22)



\*Teachers with EVAAS scores of zero are considered to be as effective as the hypothetical "average" North Carolina teacher.

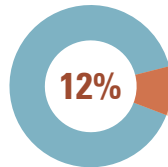
Source: NC DPI 2021-22 State of the Teaching Profession Report

## Teacher Attrition Rates in K-12 Traditional Public Schools, by Teacher Category (2021-22)



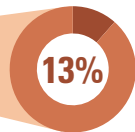
5,317 of 78,244

Fully Licensed Teachers  
(3+ Years of Experience)



1,981 of 15,588

Beginning Teachers,  
Including Lateral Entry  
(0-2 Years of Experience)



792 of 6,684

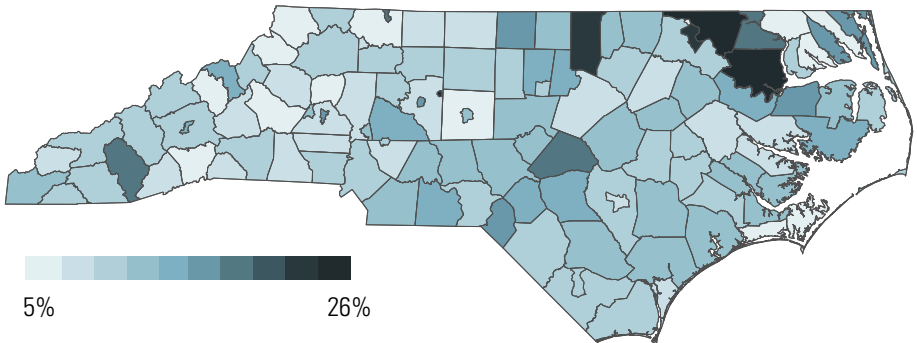
Residency Licensed  
Teachers

Source: NC DPI 2021-22 State of the Teaching Profession Report



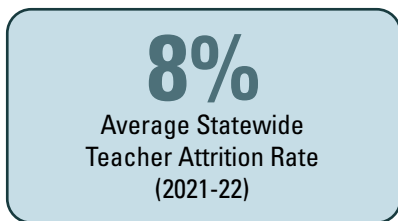
## SECTION 2: Educators

### K-12 Traditional Public Schools Teacher Departure\* Rates, by District (2021-22)



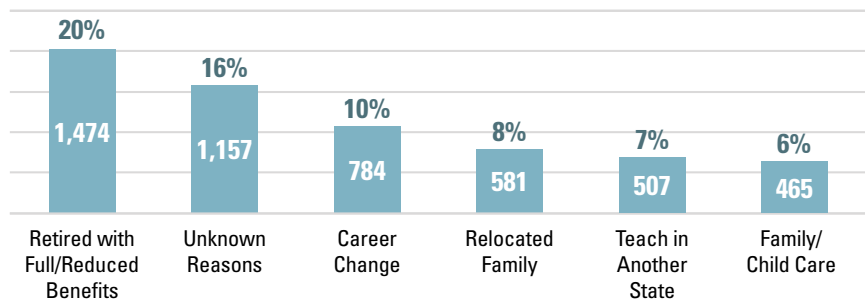
\*Departure rate is the sum of the percentage of teachers who left teaching in North Carolina and the percentage of teachers who switched districts.

Source: NC DPI 2021-22 State of the Teaching Profession Report



Source: NC DPI 2021-22 State of the Teaching Profession Report

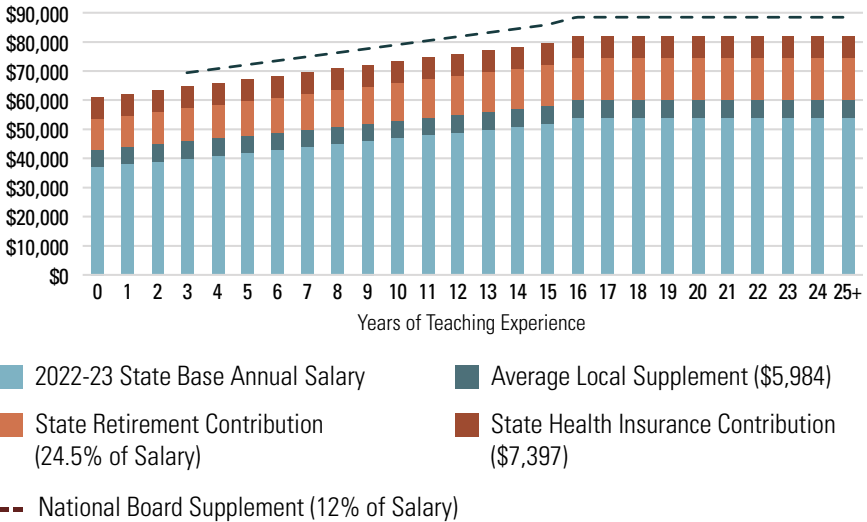
### Top Reasons for K-12 Traditional Public School Teacher Attrition (2021-22)



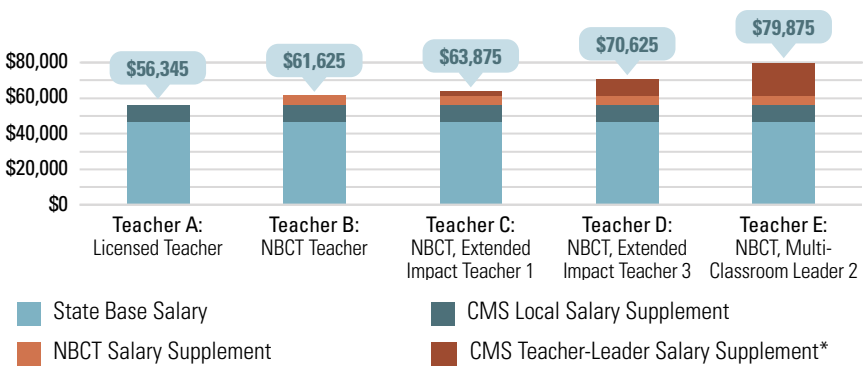
Source: NC DPI 2021-22 State of the Teaching Profession Report



## Average Compensation (including Benefits) for K-12 Public School Teachers, by Years of Experience (2022-23)



In addition to state base salary and local salary supplements, there are several state and local opportunities for higher salaries. For example, National Board-Certified Teachers (NBCT) earn 12% more, and Advanced Teaching Roles can pay as much as \$20,000 more. The following demonstrates some of the career and salary options in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) during the 2022-23 academic year for teachers with 10 years of experience:



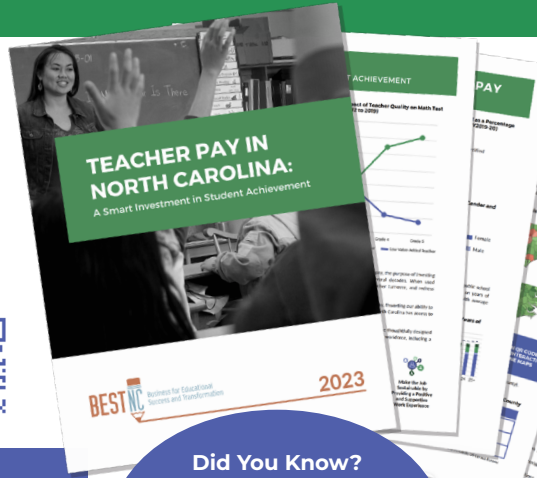
\*Advanced Teaching Roles supplements are paid along a range. Supplements included in the chart reflect work in a Title I school.

Source: 2022-23 Teacher Salary Schedule; NC Treasurer’s Office (Data Request); NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 20; Charlotte-Mecklenburg Teacher Leadership Handbook (pg. 5)

# TEACHER PAY IN NORTH CAROLINA: A Smart Investment in Student Achievement

In 2023, BEST NC released a comprehensive new report on teacher pay entitled *Teacher Pay in North Carolina: A Smart Investment in Student Achievement*. The report examines how existing teacher pay structures fail to address dramatic, decades-long shifts in our national workforce and are inadequate for meeting the personal and professional needs of today's teachers.

Follow this QR code to access your digital copy now!



## Change in Median Income (Adjusted for Inflation)

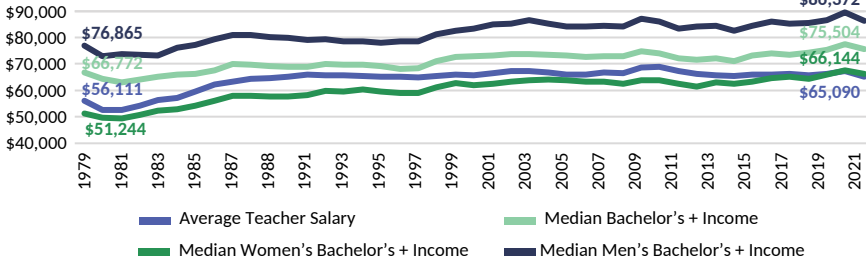
1985 to 2021

Women with Bachelor's Degree: **+22%**  
Teachers: **+10%**

### Did You Know?

Teaching is a mostly female workforce, yet teacher pay has not kept up with increasing opportunities and pay for female, college-educated professionals.

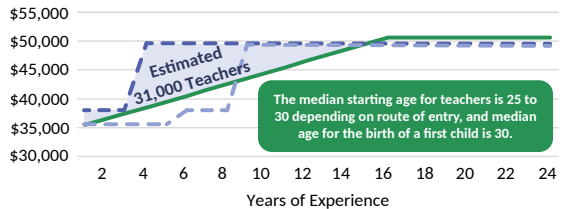
**Inflation-Adjusted Average Public School Teacher Salary and Median Incomes for Adults (25 Years or Older) with at Least a Bachelor's Degree (1985 to 2021)**



## 1/3 Earn Below a Living Wage

Under the existing salary schedule, North Carolina teachers must wait far too long before their salaries provide a living wage that can support a family.

**North Carolina State Teacher Salary Schedule vs. Typical Living Wage Trajectory of Teachers (2020-21)**



The median starting age for teachers is 25 to 30 depending on route of entry, and median age for the birth of a first child is 30.

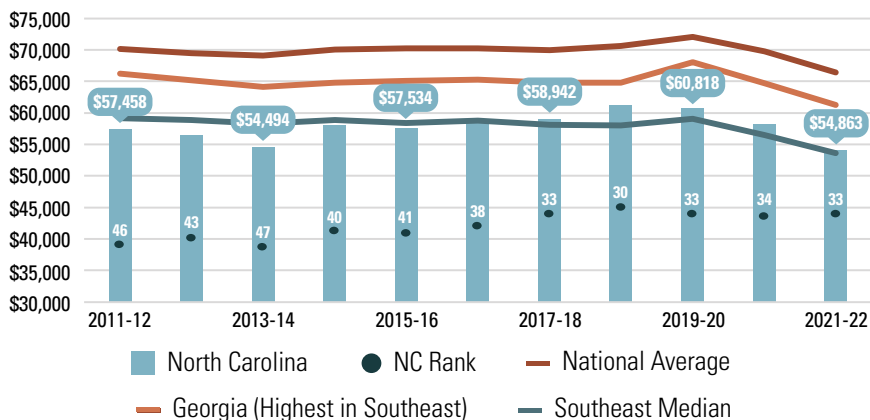
Source: NCES Digest of Education Statistics; Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis; MIT Living Wage Calculator; NC DPI Teacher Salary Schedules

— 2021-22 NC Salary Schedule  
 - - - 2021-22 Living Wage (Traditionally Prepared Teachers)  
 - - - 2021-22 Living Wage (All Other Teachers)



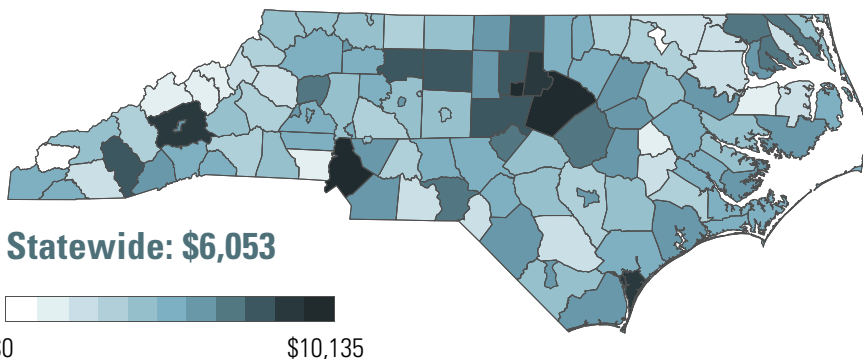
## SECTION 2: Educators

### Average K-12 Teacher Salaries, Inflation-Adjusted to 2022 Dollars (2011-12 to 2021-22)



**Source:** 2022 NEA Rankings and Estimates Report; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

### Average Local Salary Supplement for K-12 Teachers in Traditional Public Schools, by District (2022-23)



**Note:** Figures do not include funds from the Teacher Supplement Assistance Allotment. Two school districts offer no local salary supplements for K-12 teachers: Graham County Schools and Weldon City Schools.

**Source:** NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 20

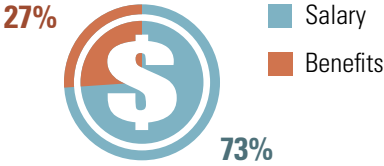
In 2021-22, the average K-12 teacher salary in **36 states** was below the national average.

**Source:** 2022 NEA Rankings and Estimates Report



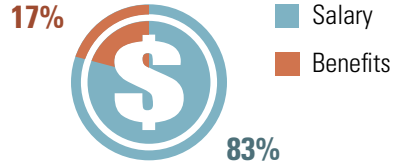


### Compensation Distribution for K-12 Traditional Public School Teachers (2021-22)



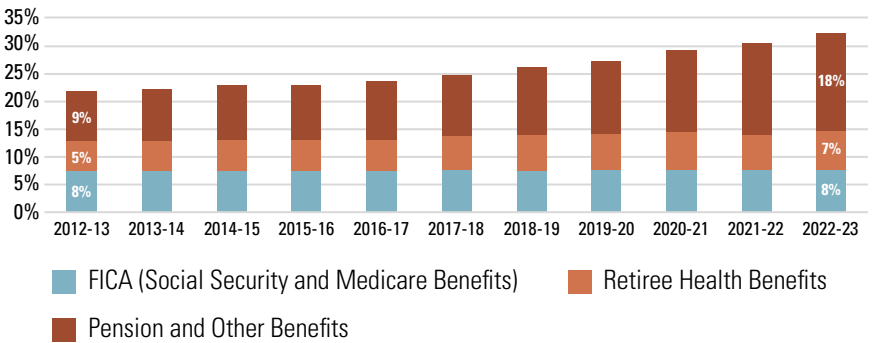
Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 27

### Compensation Distribution for the Private Sector in the U.S. South Atlantic Region (2022)



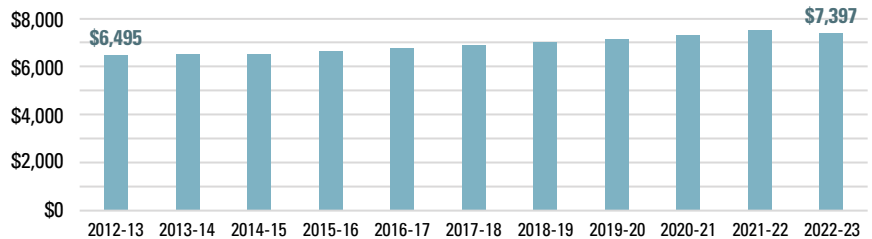
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

### State Retirement Contributions for K-12 Traditional Public School Teachers and District Personnel, as a Percentage of Employee Salary (2012-13 to 2022-23)



Source: Current Operations Appropriations Act of 2021

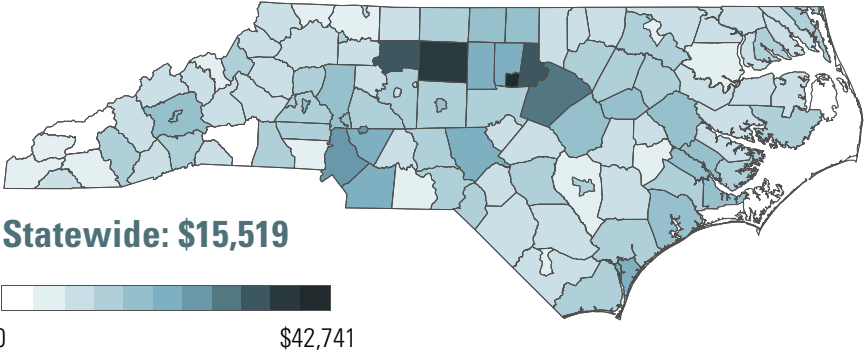
### State Health Coverage Contributions for K-12 Traditional Public School Teachers and District Personnel, Inflation-Adjusted to 2022 Dollars (2012-13 to 2022-23)



Source: NC Treasurer's Office (Data Request)



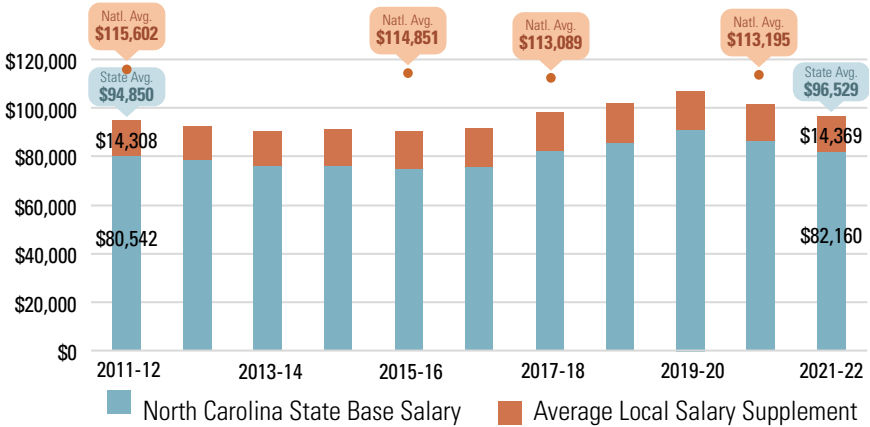
## Average Local Salary Supplement for K-12 Principals in Traditional Public Schools, by District (2022-23)



**Note:** Four districts do not offer local salary supplements for principals: Carteret County Schools, Dare County Schools, Rutherford County Schools, and Swain County Schools.

**Source:** NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 20

## Average K-12 Principal Salaries, Inflation-Adjusted to 2022 Dollars (2011-12 to 2021-22)



**Source:** NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 20; NC DPI: Highlights of the NC Public School Budget 2022; NCES National Teacher and Principal Survey 2020-21

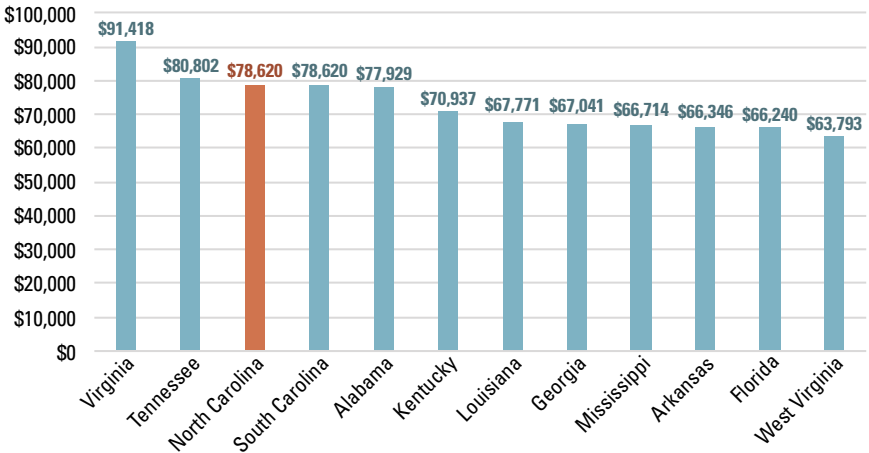
In 2022-23, the average principal salary supplement in North Carolina was **\$15,348**. Average principal salary supplements ranged from **\$0** in four school districts to **\$42,741** in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools.



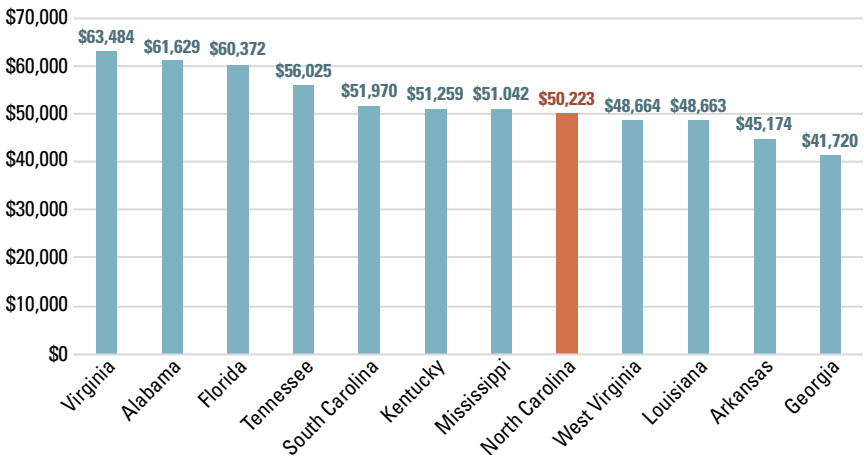
## SECTION 2: Educators

# Higher Education Salaries in the U.S. Southeast Region\* (2021-22)

## Public Four-Year Institutions



## Public Two-Year Institutions



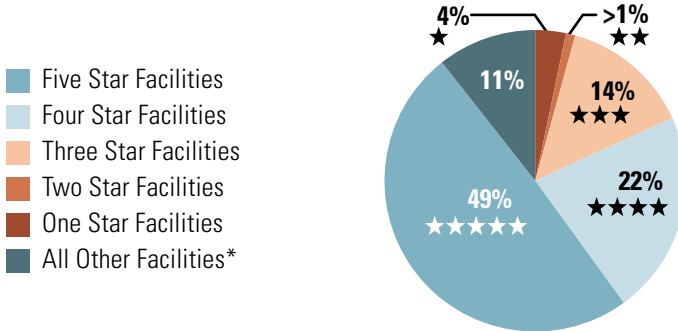
\*Salaries represent the average salary within each state for full time instructional staff, equated to a 9-month contract total.

Source: NCES IPEDS Statistical Tables



# SECTION 3: Schools & Programs

## Licensed Child-Care Programs, by Star Rating (2022)



\*An additional 23,833 children are enrolled in child-care programs that are exempt from the star-rated license system. For instance, religious-sponsored child-care programs do not receive a star rating unless they choose to apply.

Source: NC Dept. of Health and Human Services Division of Child Development and Early Education Statistical Summary Report, November 2022



In November 2022, **217,727** North Carolina children attended one of **5,484** licensed child-care programs: **4,293 (78%)** were child care centers and **1,191 (22%)** were family child-care homes.

Source: NC Dept. of Health and Human Services Division of Child Development and Early Education Statistical Summary Report, November 2022

## K-12 Schools, by Type (2021-22)

Traditional Public	2,486
Public Charter	204
Regional and Lab Schools	7
Statewide: Deaf & Blind	3
Innovation School District	1
Private	828
<b>Total Schools</b>	<b>3,529</b>

Note: There are also over 101,000 individual homeschools across North Carolina.

Source: NC DPI Highlights of the North Carolina Public School Budget 2022; 2021-22 Private School Annual Report; 2021-22 Homeschool Annual Report; NC DPI Education Services for the Deaf and Blind



## Public School Units (2022-23)

There are  
**333 PSUs**  
in North Carolina  
as of August 2022

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

Source: NC DPI Financial and Business Services

## K-12 Traditional Public School District Enrollment (2022-23)

North Carolina has **115** school districts (otherwise known as Local Education Agencies or LEAs).



**11,984 Students**  
Average District Size



**5,461 Students**  
Median District Size

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 10

**47%**

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

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

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile

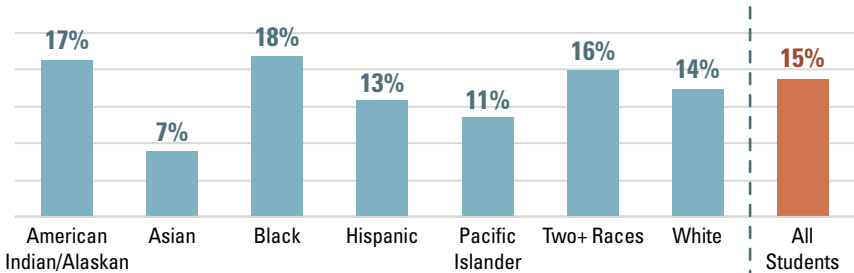


In the 2021-22 academic year, North Carolina had **160,528** home-schooled students. If homeschooling were a district, it would be the largest district in North Carolina.

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 10; 2021-22 Homeschool Annual Report



## Children Who Receive Special Education Services in K-12 Public Schools, by Race/Ethnicity (2021-22)



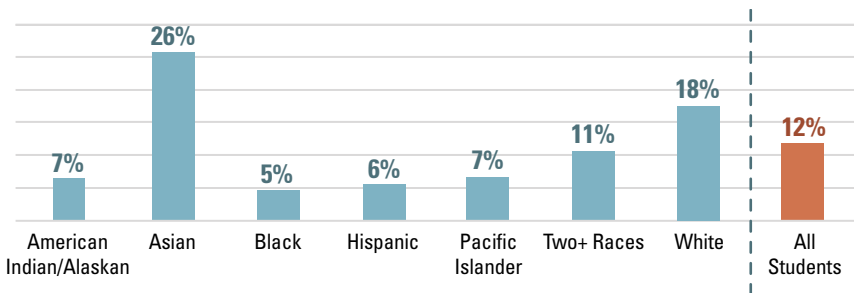
**Source:** NC DPI Federal Child Count Reporting (April 2022); NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 10



In 2021-22, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Exceptional Children Division supported local school districts to develop and implement individualized education plans (IEPs) for over **194,000 students with disabilities** in North Carolina K-12 public schools.

**Source:** NC DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 9 and 38

## Children in Academically and Intellectually Gifted Programs in K-12 Public Schools, by Race/Ethnicity (2021-22)



**Source:** NC DPI Academically and Intellectually Gifted Child Count, 2022

Over **161,000 students** were enrolled in gifted education programming in 2020-21. White students were enrolled at **3x the rate** of Black and Hispanic students.

**Source:** NC DPI Division of Advanced Learning & Gifted Education



## SPOTLIGHT ON:

## Advanced Math Access in North Carolina

Research shows that students who enroll in and complete advanced math courses are more likely to be ready for post-secondary education than students who do not. However, in many states and districts across the country, qualified students often do not receive access to advanced math courses. This happens more frequently to economically disadvantaged students, leading to inequitable access to challenging math coursework for low-income students.

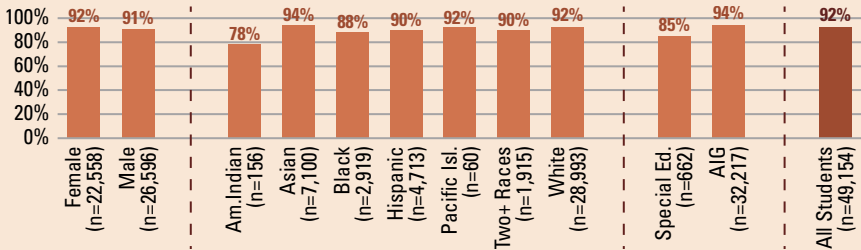
# 92%

During the 2022-23 school year, **45,003 of 49,154 qualifying students** in grades 6 and above were placed in an advanced math course.

In 2018, the North Carolina General Assembly passed legislation that requires all students who score at the highest level on their math End-of-Grade test to be placed into an advanced learning opportunity (grades 3-5) or advanced math course (grades 6 and up) during the following school year. In 2019, the law was updated to require an annual report on implementation, including capturing how the demographic makeup of advanced math course enrollment is altered by the policy.

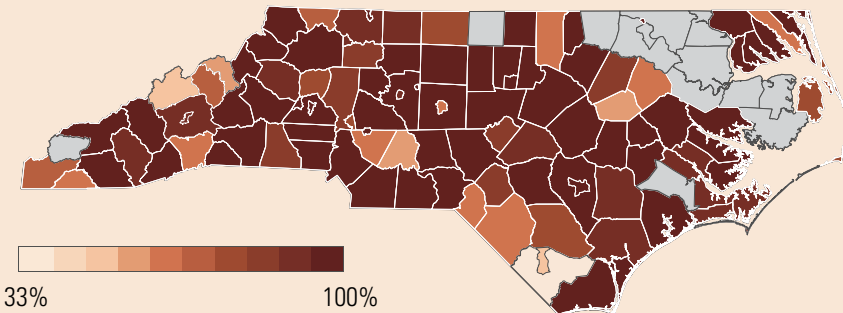
Below is a look at data from the 2022-23 report on Access to Advanced Math Courses.

### Figure 1: Percentage of Students in Grades 6 and Above Scoring at the Highest Level on Math EOG/EOC and Also Placed in an Advanced Math Course, by Student Subgroup (2022-23)



Placement rates vary across North Carolina's school districts, from 33% in Columbus County to 100% in 18 districts

### Figure 2: Percentage of Students Scoring at the Highest Level on Math EOG Placed in an Advanced Math Course, by District (2022-23)



**Note:** For privacy reasons, data is suppressed for school districts with fewer than 10 students enrolled in an advanced math course. Those 13 districts are shown in gray.

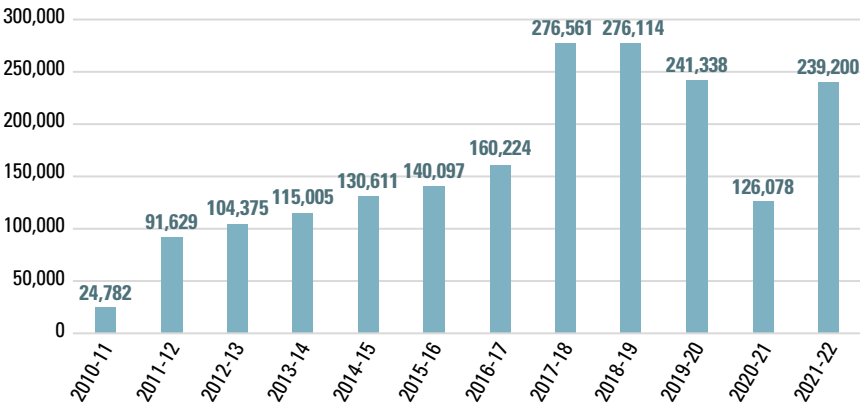
**Source:** North Carolina General Assembly – Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee; News and Observer – Counted Out; Fordham Institute – Ohio’s Lost Einsteins; American Institutes for Research – Predictors of Post-Secondary Success; Report to the North Carolina General Assembly: Advanced Courses in Mathematics, December 2022; NC DPI (Data Request)



## Career and Technical Education

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

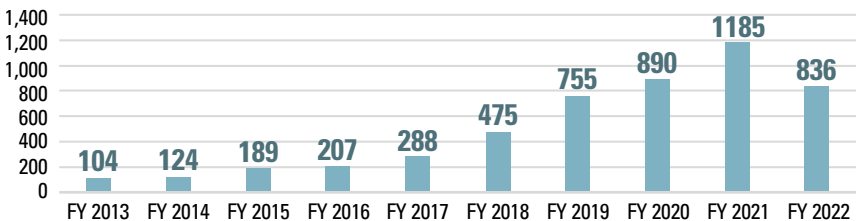
### CTE Credentials Earned in K-12 Traditional Public Schools (2010-11 to 2021-22)



Source: NC DPI CTE Credentials and Reporting Page (2021-22 Credential Report)

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

### K-12 Student Participation in Youth Apprenticeship Program (FY2013 to FY2022)



Source: ApprenticeNC (Data Request)

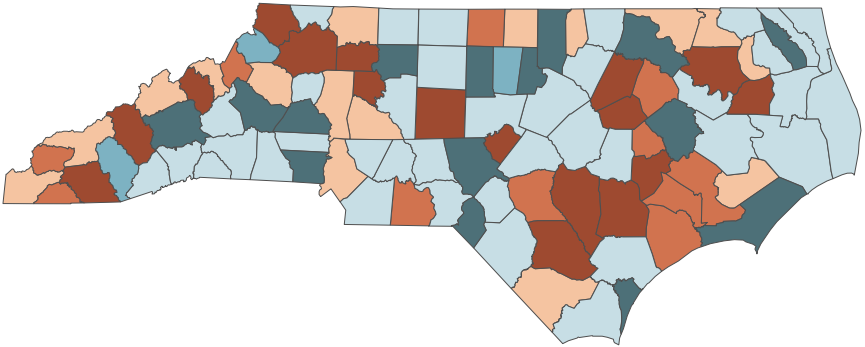




## School Systems as Employers

Traditional K-12 public school districts are the single-largest employer in 38 North Carolina counties, a top-3 employer in 81 counties, and a top-5 employer in all 100 counties. Institutes of Higher education are the single-largest employer in 3 North Carolina counties, with all three being part of the UNC System.

## Largest Employer Industry, by County (2022)



- Health Services
- Higher Education
- K-12 Education
- Manufacturing
- Public Administration
- Other

Source: NC Department of Commerce: Quarterly Census of Employers and Wages - Quarter 2, 2022

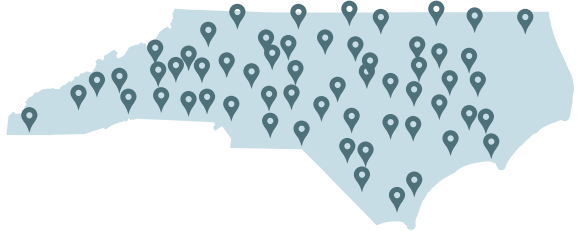




## Higher Education Institutions (2023)

### North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS)

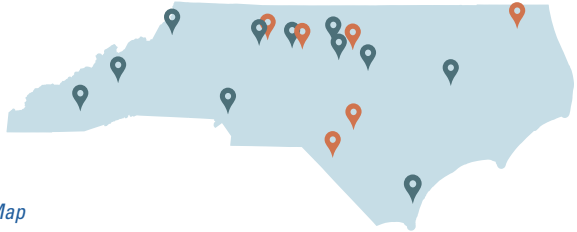
**58** Community Colleges



**Source:** NCCCS Main Campuses

### UNC System

**17** Public Campuses



**Source:** UNC System Campuses Map

### Independent Colleges and Universities

**36** Institutions



**Source:** NCICU Colleges and Universities

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

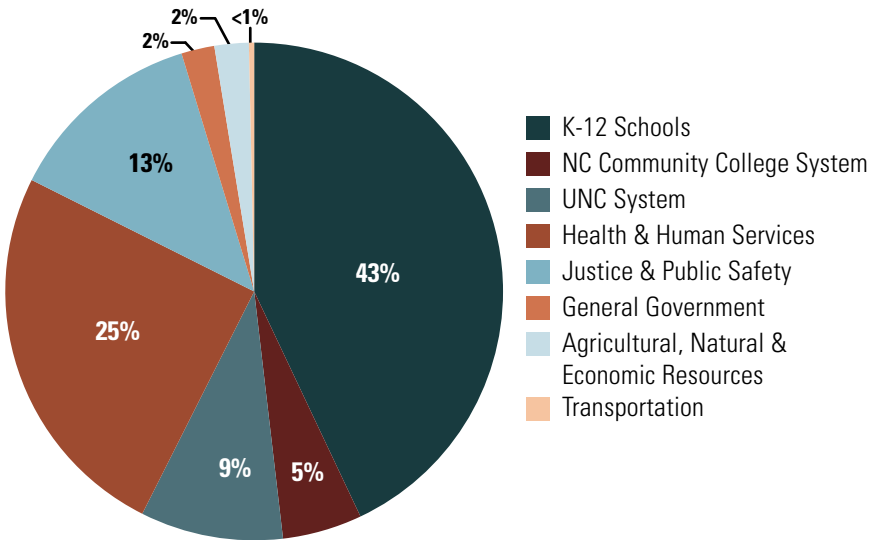
In Fall 2021, **211,054 students** attended North Carolina community colleges (including full-time and part-time students, but not including non-credit workforce enrollment), making it the **5th-largest** community college system in the nation.



# SECTION 4: Finance

## North Carolina General Fund Appropriations (2022-23)

K-12 Schools	\$11,278,567,752	43%
NC Community College System	\$1,357,604,076	5%
UNC System	\$3,528,247,180	9%
Health & Human Services	\$6,552,534,071	25%
HHS: Division of Child Development & Early Education	\$251,894,393	1%
Justice & Public Safety	\$3,383,362,665	13%
General Government	\$564,146,598	2%
Agricultural, Natural & Economic Resources	\$584,281,192	2%
Transportation	\$89,434,160	<1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$26,244,263,810</b>	<b>100%</b>



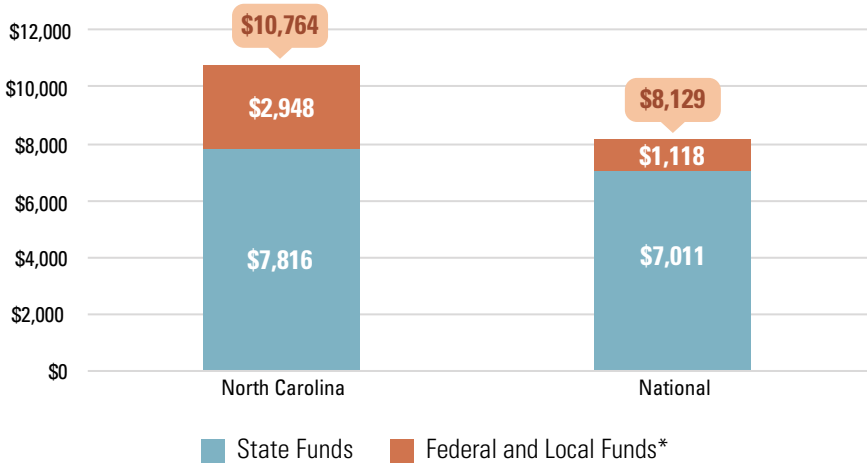
Source: North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management: Certified Budget Fiscal Year 2022-23

**58%** of the North Carolina General Fund appropriations support K-12 public and higher education.

Source: North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management: Certified Budget Fiscal Year 2022-23



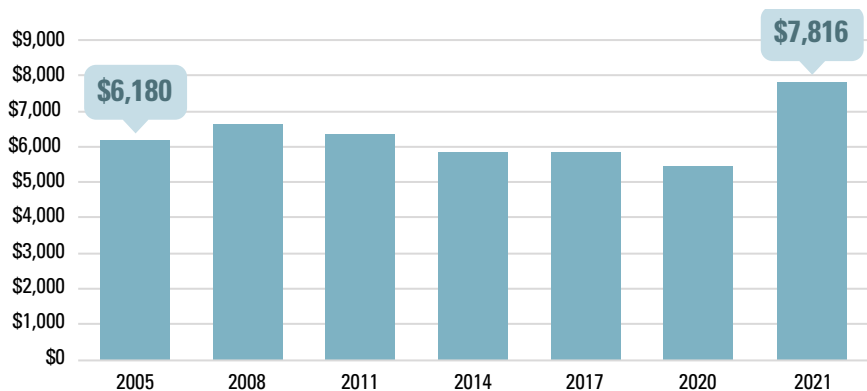
## Total Spending per Child Enrolled in State Pre-K Programs, by Funding Source (2021)



\*Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure. To learn more, check out the [NC Early Childhood Foundation Cost of NC Pre-K Fact Sheet](#).

**Source:** NIEER 2021 State of Preschool Report; NIEER 2021 State of Preschool Report - NC Profile

## State Spending per Child Enrolled in NC Pre-K, Inflation-Adjusted to 2021 Dollars (2005 to 2021\*)



\*Selective years as reported National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER).

**Source:** NIEER 2021 State of Preschool Report - NC Profile



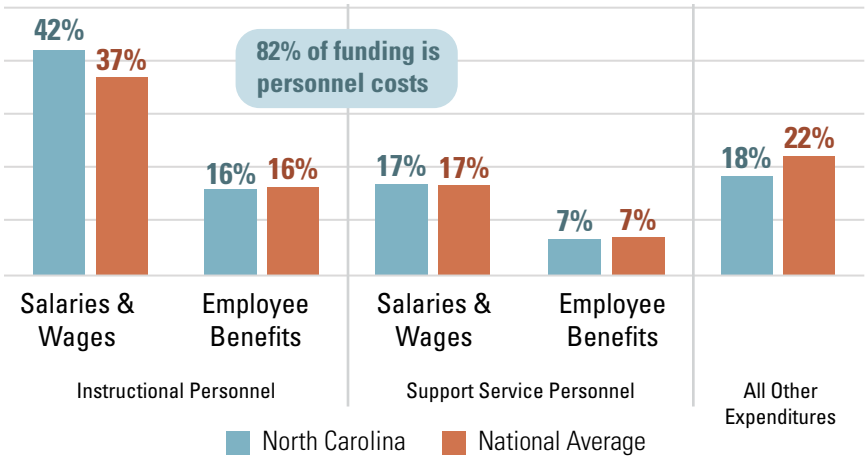
## SECTION 4: Finance

### Per Pupil Revenue for K-12 Public Education, by Source (FY2020)

	North Carolina	National Average
<b>Total Revenue Per Pupil</b>	<b>\$10,790</b>	<b>\$16,062</b>
State %	\$6,648 (62%)	\$7,548 (47%)
Federal %	\$1,132 (10%)	\$1,204 (7%)
Local %	\$3,010 (28%)	\$7,310 (46%)

*Source: US Census, 2020 Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Data, Summary Tables 1 & 19*

### Distribution of K-12 Public Education Expenditures, by Function (FY2020)



*Source: US Census, 2020 Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Data, Summary Table 6*



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

*Source: US Census Bureau, 2020 Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Data, Summary Table 6.*



## State Education Funding in North Carolina

North Carolina provides a base level of state funding to all districts, determined, in part, by the number of students enrolled, and provides additional state funding to districts based on student needs and district characteristics. In 2022-23, state spending on K-12 education was \$11.9 billion from all state sources, including the following allotments for special circumstances:



Funding for Children  
with Disabilities:

**\$1.06 Billion**



Funding for English  
Language Learners:

**\$120 Million**



Disadvantaged Student  
Supplemental Funding:

**\$106 Million**



Small County  
Supplemental Funding:

**\$55 Million**

(for 29 county school districts)



Low Wealth District  
Supplemental Funding:

**\$299 Million**

(for 78 districts)

*Source: NC DPI 2023 Highlights of the Public School Budget*

In 2022, North Carolina ranked 38th in total per pupil funding.\*

**38th**

In 2022, North Carolina ranked 12th for the percentage of education funding provided by the state.

**12th**

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

*Source: 2022 NEA Rankings and Estimates Report*

In 2021-22, total per pupil expenditures ranged from **\$8,662** in Idaho to **\$29,897** in New York. The percent of education funding provided by the state ranged from **28%** in Missouri to **86%** in Vermont.

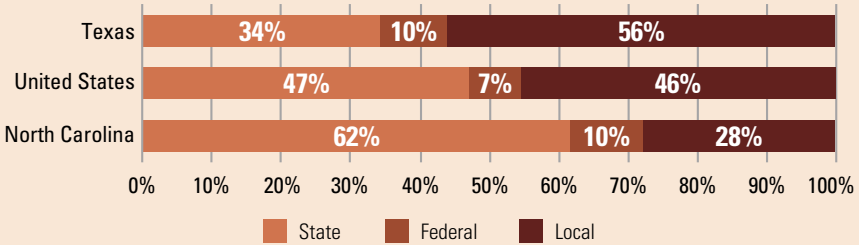


## SPOTLIGHT ON:

# North Carolina's Unique State-Level Funding Model

Unique to North Carolina, K-12 education operating costs have been the responsibility of the state since the passage of *The Machinery Act* in 1931. In order to keep schools open during the Great Depression, the state of North Carolina assumed responsibility for the financial costs of operating schools while localities were deemed responsible for building and maintaining public school facilities. This approach continues to set North Carolina apart from most other states where local property taxes are the main source for education funding.

**Figure 1: Public School Revenue in Texas, the United States, and North Carolina, by Funding Source (2019-20)**



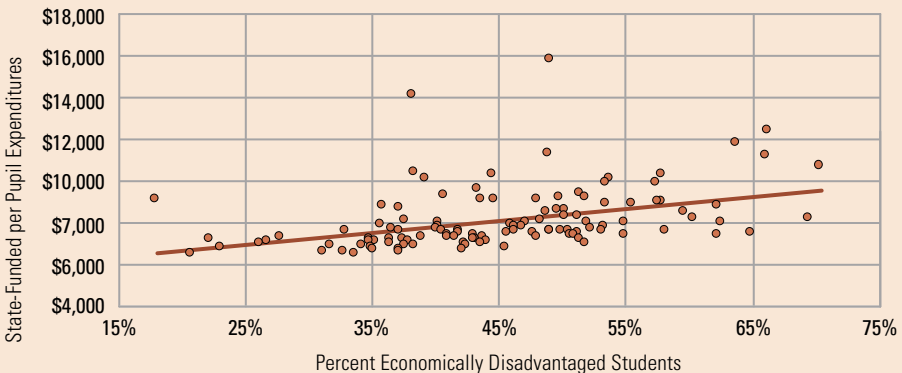
In other states, relying primarily on local funding creates tremendous resource disparities because affluent communities have larger tax bases than more impoverished communities, and the latter generally require greater financial resources to meet their students' educational needs. Although this disparity between local wealth and student need also occurs in North Carolina, its impact is substantially mitigated by the fact that the state provides the majority of base education operation funding, as well as additional funding for low-wealth school districts, small counties, and disadvantaged students, among other needs (see page 46).

As a result, in North Carolina, schools in the highest poverty quartile receive 22% more total funding per pupil than schools in the lowest poverty quartile (see page 52). The scatterplot below shows that state-funded per pupil expenditures are highest in districts with greater percentages of economically disadvantaged students. It is important to note that while state funds provide a measure of equity to overall school funding, this does not mean they are adequate to ensure that every student has access to a highly effective teacher.

For More School- and District-Level PPE Data, Follow This QR Code



**Figure 2: State-Funded per Pupil Expenditures in Traditional Public School Districts, by Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students (2020-21)**

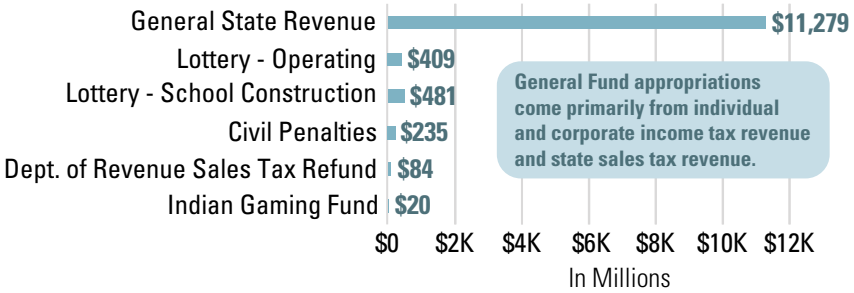


Source: US Census Bureau; North Carolina School Report Cards



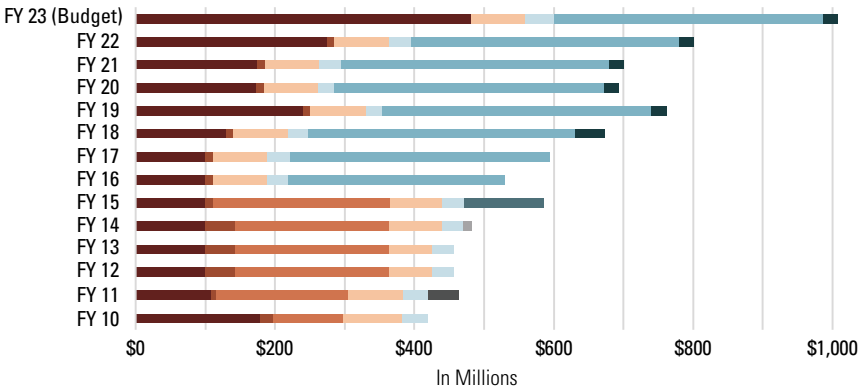
## SECTION 4: Finance

### State Revenue Sources for K-12 Public Education (2022-23)



Source: Office of State Budget and Management - 2022-23 Certified Budget

### North Carolina Education Lottery: Education-Directed Spending, by Category (FY10-FY23)



- School Construction
- UNC Needs-Based Aid
- Classroom Teachers
- NC Pre-K
- College Scholarships
- Digital Learning
- Non-Instructional Support Personnel
- Teacher Assistants
- School Transportation
- Reserves and Medicaid Shortfall

Source: Current Operations Appropriations Act of 2021



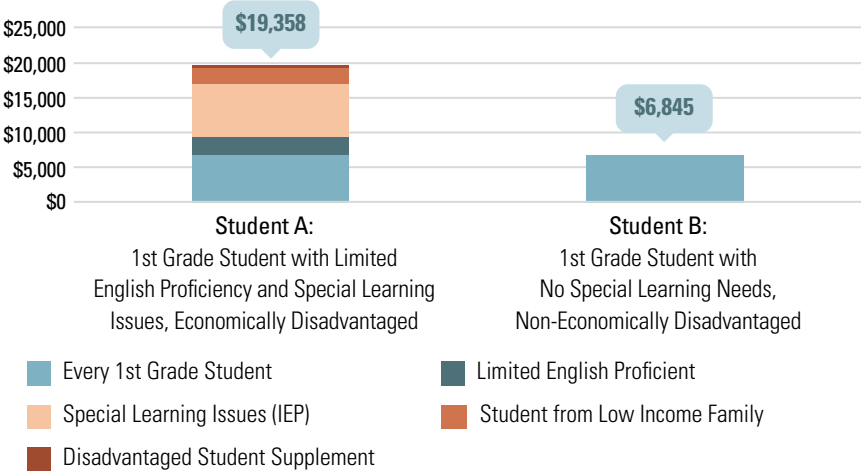
“The General Assembly shall provide by taxation and otherwise for a general and uniform system of free public schools, which shall be maintained at least nine months in every year, and wherein equal opportunities shall be provided for all students.”

– Article IX, Section 2, North Carolina Constitution





## Example Federal and State per Pupil K-12 Public Education Funding, by Student Characteristic (2022-23)\*



\*Data are based on student characteristics and exclude all local funding, as well as any low-wealth and small county supplemental funding from the state.

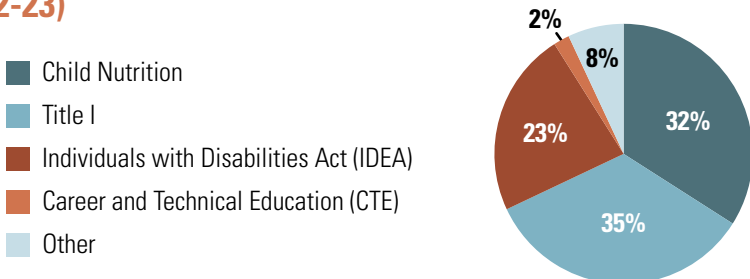
Source: NC DPI 2023 Highlights of the Public School Budget

## Federal Education Funding in North Carolina

In most school years, roughly 10% of K-12 public education funding in North Carolina comes from the federal government. However, due to one-time COVID relief funding, federal funding accounted for 20% of K-12 public education funding in North Carolina in 2021-22. Traditionally, federal funds mainly support child nutrition, students with disabilities, and students from low-income households (Title I).

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 27

## Distribution of Federal K-12 Public Education Funds (2022-23)



Note: Does not include one-time COVID-19 relief funding.

Source: NC DPI 2023 Highlights of the Public School Budget



## SECTION 4: Finance

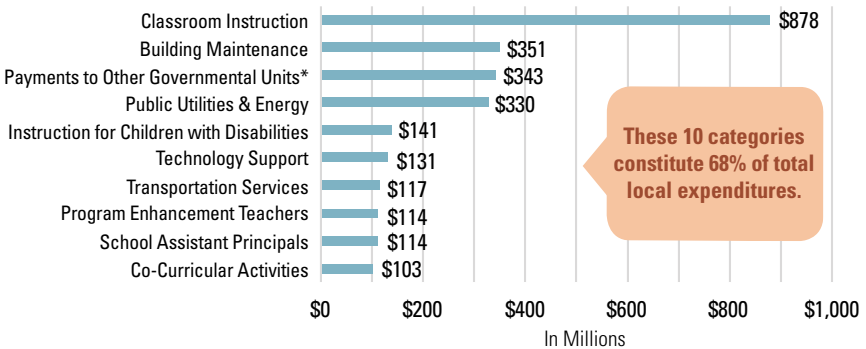
### Local Education Funding in North Carolina

In addition to state and federal funds, North Carolina counties provide local funding to supplement K-12 school "Operations," for example for teachers and other staff. Local funds are also used for "Capital Expenditures," which help build, furnish, and maintain K-12 school buildings.

In 2021-22, local funds for school operations ranged from **\$698 per pupil in Wayne County Public Schools** to **\$7,535 per pupil in Chapel-Hill/Carrboro City Schools**, with a median of **\$1,972 per pupil**. In 2021-22, local dollars funded **26,599 positions** in K-12 public schools, including **6,534 service workers**, **5,818 teachers**, **1,948 teacher assistants**, and **818 assistant principals** across the state.

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile

### Top-10 Local K-12 Public Education Operating Expenditures (2021-22)

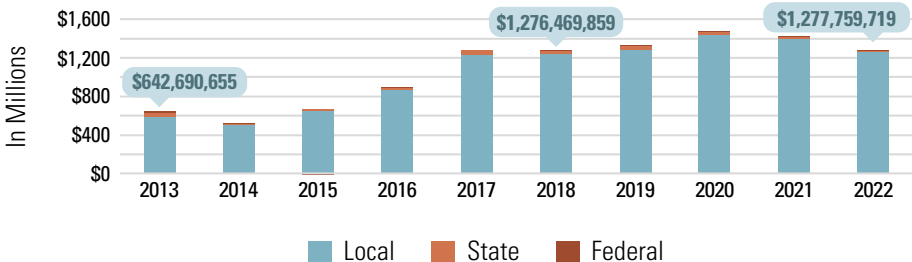


Note: This does not include capital expenditures. For capital expenditures, please see below.

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 27

\*Predominately transfers to public charter schools.

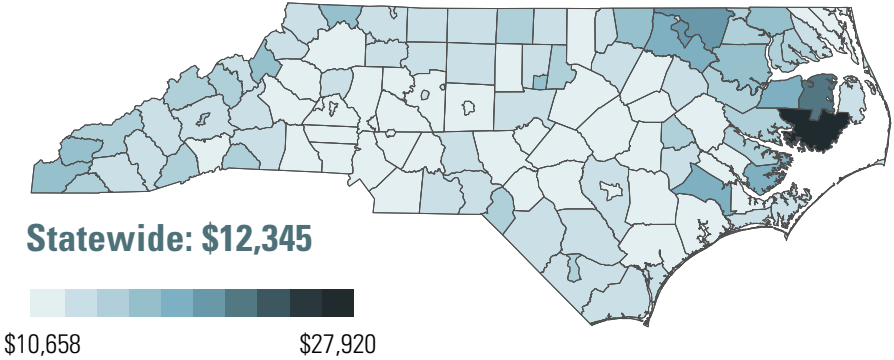
### K-12 Public Education Capital Expenditures, Inflation-Adjusted to 2022 Dollars, by Source (2013 to 2022)



Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 28

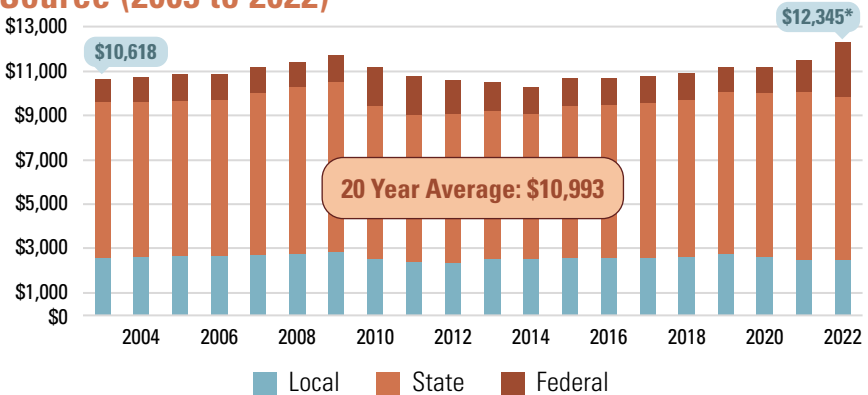


## Total K-12 Traditional Public Education per Pupil Expenditures, by District (2021-22)



Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 24

## K-12 Traditional Public Education Per Pupil Expenditures, Inflation-Adjusted to 2022 Dollars, by Source (2003 to 2022)



\*Includes one-time COVID-19 relief funding of \$60 per pupil in 2020, \$463 per pupil in 2021, and \$1,441 per pupil in 2022.

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 23; NC DPI COVID Expenditure and Allotment Data

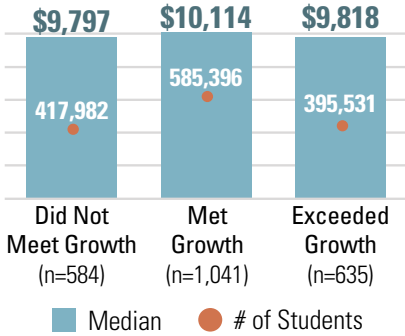
Between 2017 and 2022, inflation-adjusted total per pupil expenditures in North Carolina increased by **14%**. This increase is due in part to an influx of one-time federal COVID relief funds. Inflation-adjusted federal and state per pupil expenditures increased by **106%** and **6%**, respectively, while inflation-adjusted local per pupil expenditures decreased by **5%** over the same time frame.

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 24



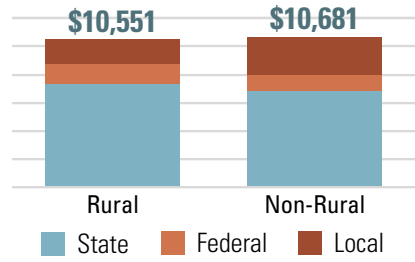
SECTION 4: Finance

### K-12 Traditional Public Schools per Pupil Expenditures, by School Growth Status (2018-19)



Source: NC DPI School Report Cards; NC DPI Accountability and Reporting

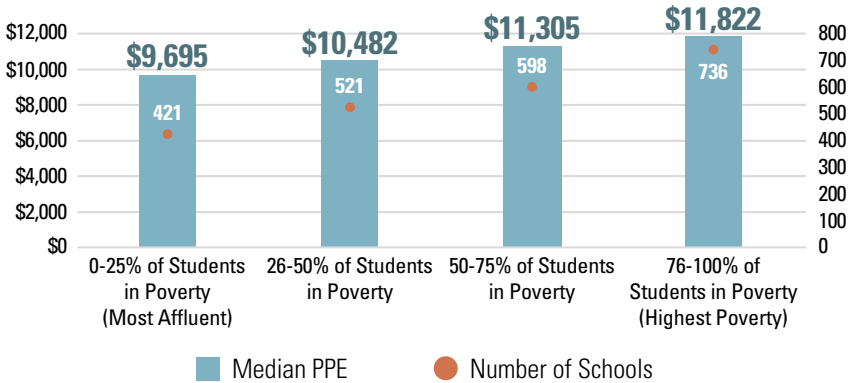
### K-12 Traditional Public School per Pupil Expenditures\*, by Source and Rural Status (2020-21)



\*Per pupil expenditures include COVID relief funding.

Source: NC DPI School Report Cards; NC DPI EDDIE Database

### Median per Pupil Expenditures in Traditional K-12 Public Schools, by School Poverty Level (2020-21)



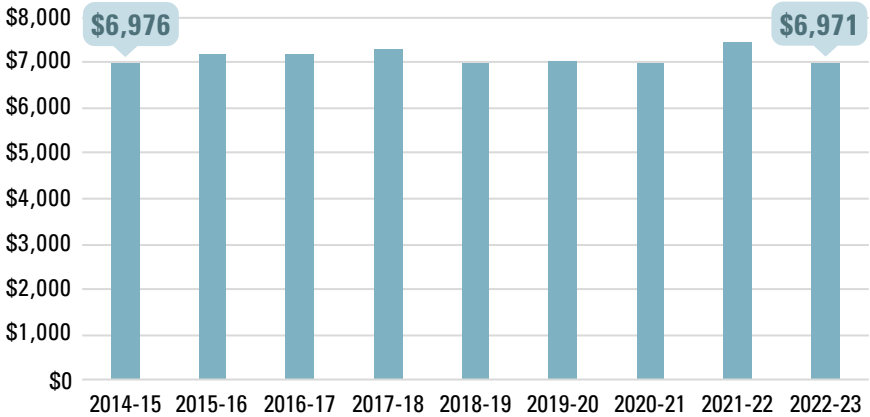
Source: NC DPI School Report Cards

**22%** Traditional public schools in the highest poverty quartile receive **22% more** per pupil funding than traditional public schools in the lowest poverty quartile (most affluent).

Source: NC DPI School Report Cards

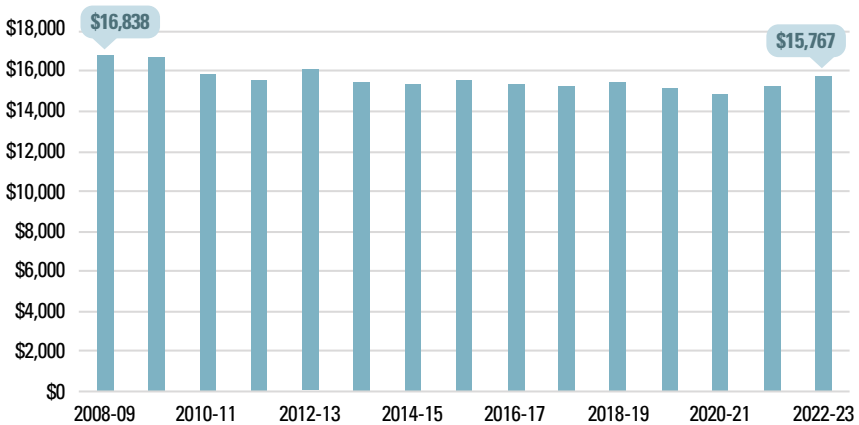


## North Carolina Community College System: State Spending per Full-Time Student, Inflation-Adjusted to 2022 Dollars (2014-15 to 2022-23)



**Source:** North Carolina Community College System: Annual State Aid Allocations and Budget Policies Summary

## UNC System: State Spending per Full-Time Student, Inflation Adjusted to 2022 Dollars (2008-09 to 2022-23)

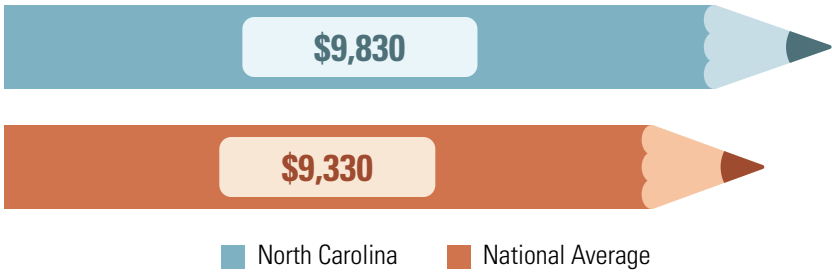


**Source:** North Carolina General Assembly - Fiscal Research Division (Data Request)



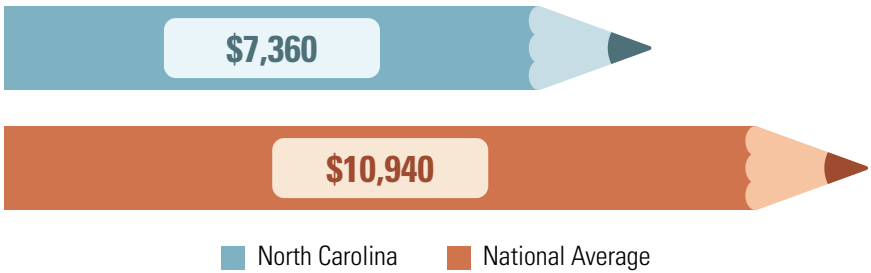
## SECTION 4: Finance

### State and Local Funding for Higher Education per Full-Time Student (2020-21)



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

### Average In-State Tuition and Fees at Public Four-Year Higher Education Institutions (2022-23)



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

In 2020-21, North Carolina ranked 14th nationally for public higher education funding per full-time student.



In 2022-23, average in-state tuition at North Carolina's public four-year institutions was 3rd-lowest nationally.



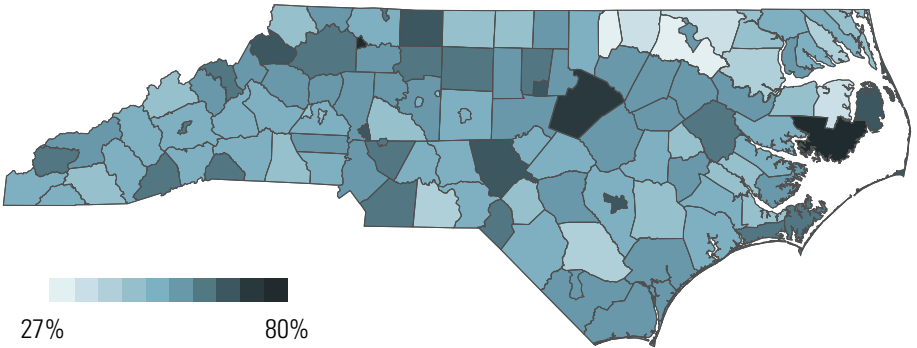
**Source:** College Board: Trends in College Pricing Annual Report



## Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be filled out by anyone seeking federal aid to help fund their higher education expenses. This is a key metric for educational matriculation and attainment. In North Carolina, FAFSA completions range from between 25 and 29% in Halifax County Schools to greater than 80% in Elkin City Schools, with a median district completion rate between 55 and 59%.

### FAFSA Completion Rates, by District (2022-23 Cycle, through December 2022)



**Source:** U.S. Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid: FAFSA Completion by High School and Public School District



**77%** of North Carolina public school districts have an estimated FAFSA completion rate of 50% or higher in 2022-23.

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



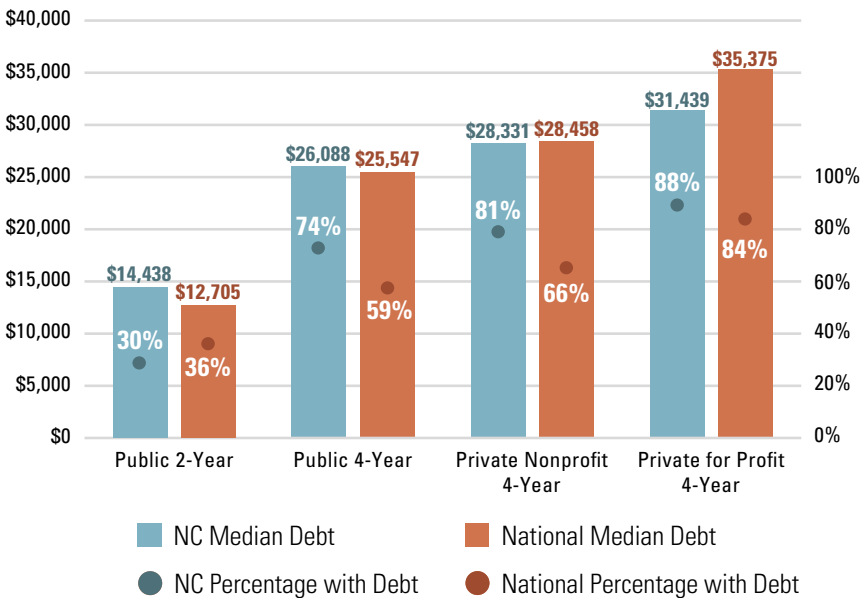
SECTION 4: Finance



“The General Assembly shall provide that the benefits of The University of North Carolina and other public institutions of higher education, as far as practicable, be extended to the people of the State free of expense.”

– Article IX, Section 9, North Carolina Constitution

### Median College Debt and Percentage of Graduates with Debt, by Institution Type (Graduating Class of 2016)



Source: NCES Powerstats

55%

Percentage of 2020 North Carolina 4-Year College Graduates with Debt

\$29,681

Median Amount Owed by 2020 North Carolina 4-Year College Graduates with Debt

Source: Institute for College Access & Student Success - Student Debt and the Class of 2020





# SECTION 5: Achievement

## Statewide Assessments for K-12 Public School Students

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

Test	State	Federal
K-3 Reading (Various Assessments)	✓	
3rd Grade Beginning-of-Grade Reading	✓	
3rd-8th Grade End-of-Grade Tests in Both Math and Reading, also in Science for 5th and 8th Grades		✓
End-of-Course Tests in Biology, Math I, and English II		✓
ACT Testing Suite, Given in 10th, 11th, & 12th Grades	✓	
Career and Technical Education (CTE) Assessments in All CTE Courses		✓

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

**Source:** NC DPI Testing and School Accountability

## Achievement Levels on North Carolina End-of-Grade and End-of-Course Exams

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

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

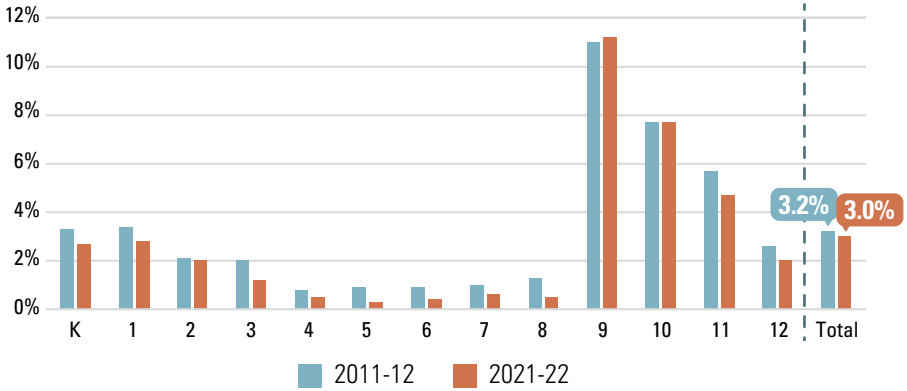
\*For NCEXTEND Alternate Assessments, student achievement levels are Level 4, Level 3, and Not Proficient.

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

**Source:** NC DPI Testing and School Accountability



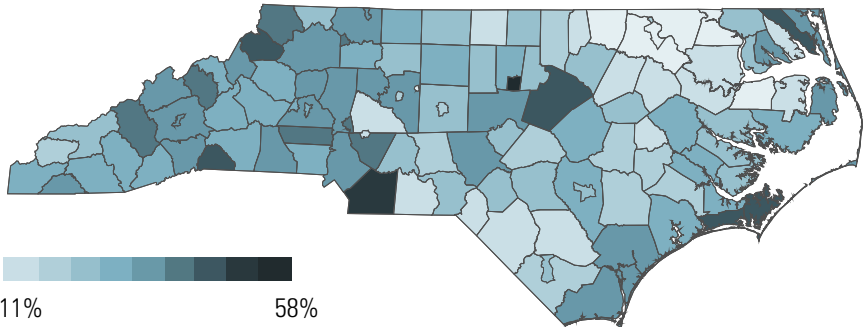
## Retention\* (Non-Promotion) Rates in K-12 Traditional Public Schools, by Grade Level (2011-12 and 2021-22)



\*Students were retained at the end of the academic year listed and remained in the same grade for the following school year.

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 2

## College and Career Readiness\* of K-12 Traditional Public School Students, by District (2021-22)



\*College and career readiness is indicated by scores of 4 or 5 on all End-of-Grade or End-of-Course assessments.

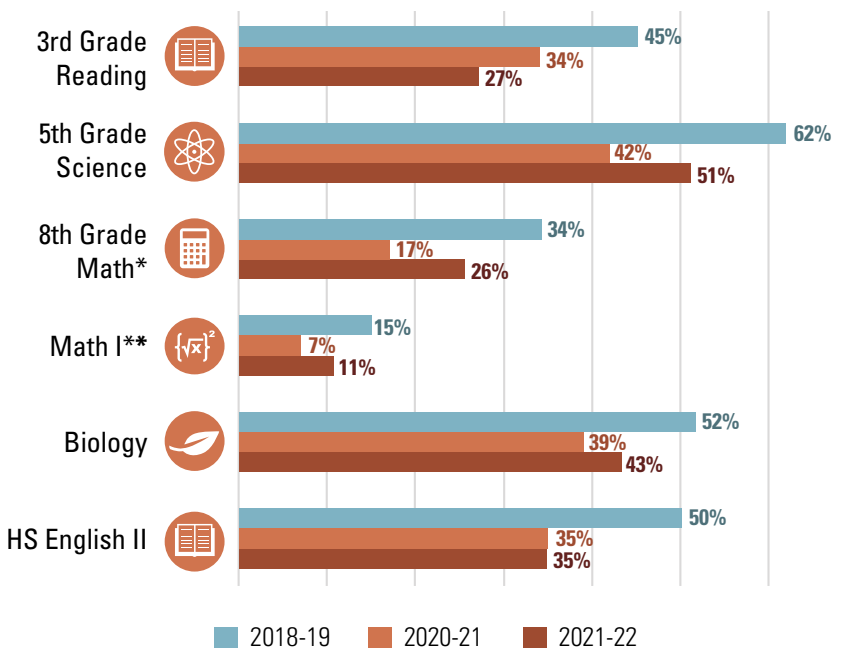
Source: NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports

In 2022, the overall student retention rate in North Carolina traditional public schools was 3%. Retention was highest in grade 9 (11.2%) and grade 10 (7.7%) and lowest in grades 5-8 (less than 1%).

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 2



## K-12 Public School Students On Track for College & Career, by Selected Subject (2018-19, 2020-21, and 2021-22)



\*Represents a composite of the scores of 8th grade students on the Grade 8 Math EOG and the Math 1 EOC.

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

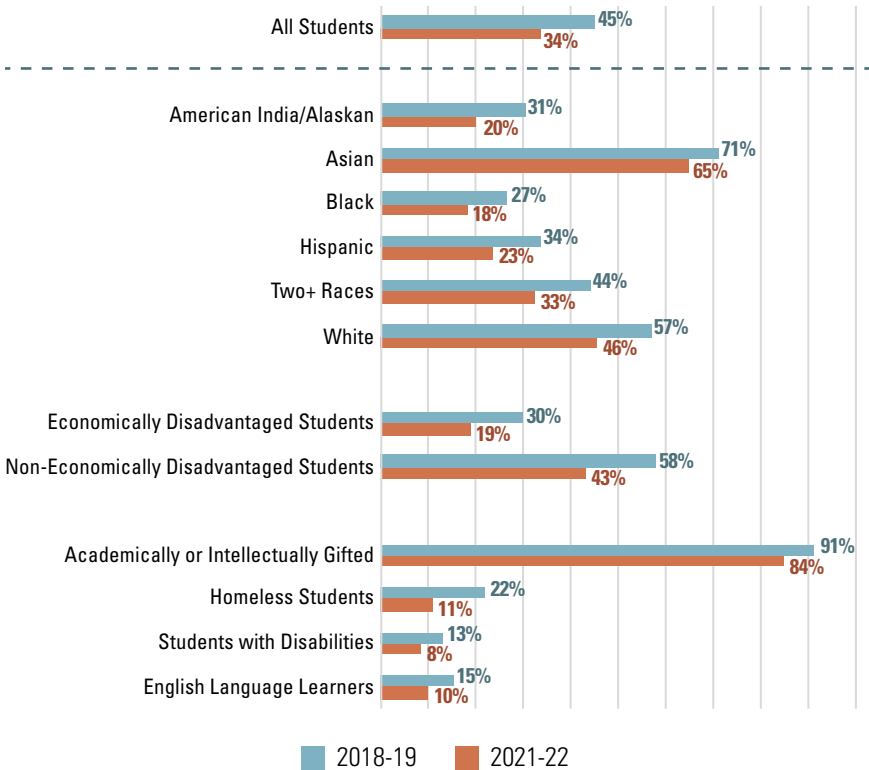
Source: NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports

**27%** of 3rd grade students in North Carolina public schools were on track for college and career in reading in 2021-22. 

Source: NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports



## College and Career Readiness (CCR) of K-12 Traditional Public School Students, by Student Subgroup (2018-19 and 2021-22)



Source: NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports

## College and Career Readiness Achievement Gap (2021-22)

Gap between  
White and Black  
students:

**28 PERCENTAGE  
POINTS**

Gap between  
White and Hispanic  
students:

**23 PERCENTAGE  
POINTS**

Gap between  
ED\* and Non-ED  
students:

**24 PERCENTAGE  
POINTS**

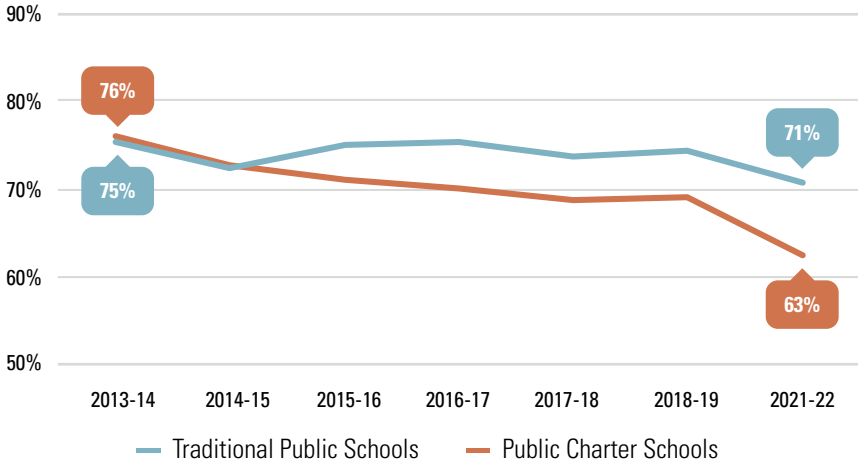
Source: NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports

\*Economically disadvantaged



## SECTION 5: Achievement

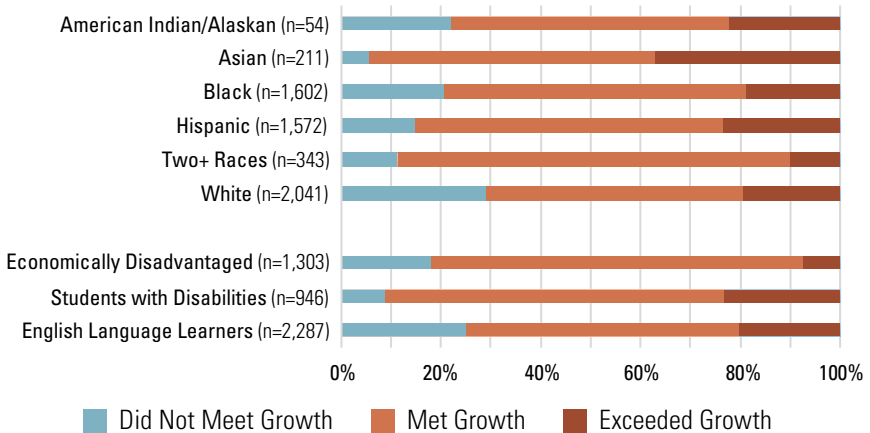
### K-12 Public Schools Meeting or Exceeding Expected Student Growth, by School Type (2013-14 to 2021-22) 🌟



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

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

### Distribution of Academic Growth for K-12 Public Schools, by Student Subgroup (2021-22) 🌟

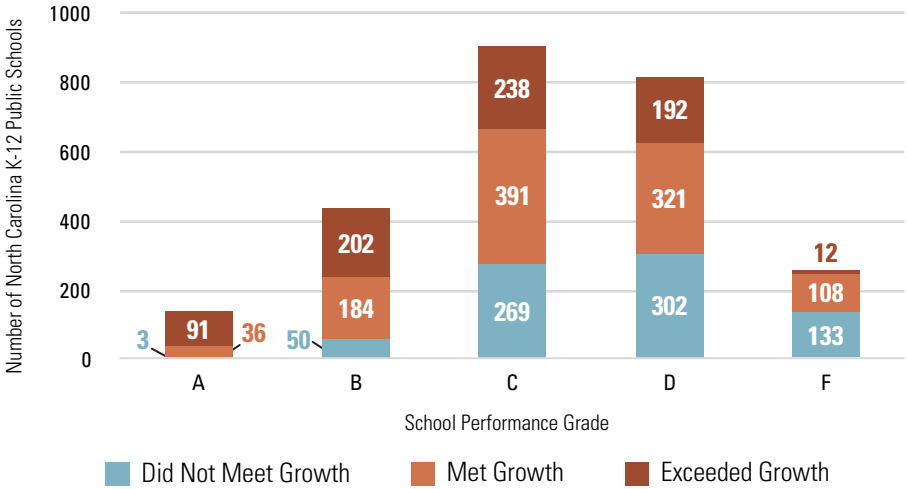


**Note:** n = the number of schools with 30 or more students in the indicated subgroup.

**Source:** NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports: 2021–22 Performance and Growth of North Carolina Public Schools Annual Testing Reports

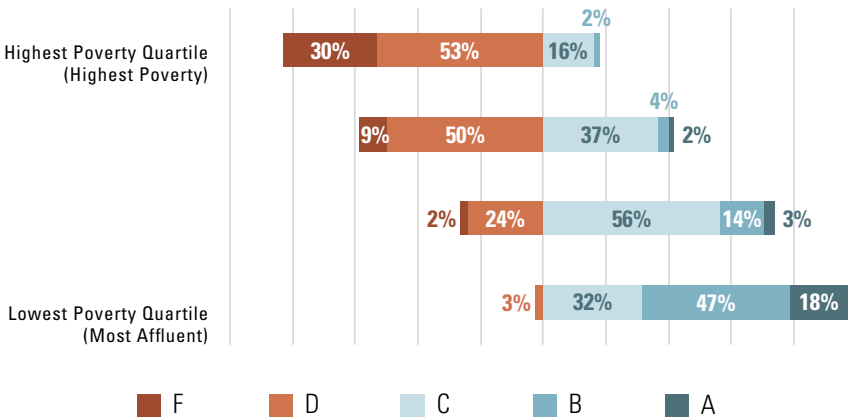


## K-12 Public School Performance Grades, by Student Academic Growth (2021-22) 🌟



**Source:** NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports: 2021–22 Performance and Growth of North Carolina Public Schools Annual Testing Reports

## School Performance Grades, by School Poverty Level (2021-22) 🌟



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

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



## National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (2022)



All states participate in NAEP, making it the most comprehensive measure of K-12 student achievement, trends, and state rankings across the nation. For more detailed data visit:

[www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile](http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile) and [www.NCEdFacts.org](http://www.NCEdFacts.org).

		% of Students At or Above Proficient		
Grade	Subject Area	North Carolina	National Public Average	Highest Proficiency Rate
4th	Reading	32%	32%	43% (MA)
4th	Math	35%	35%	44% (WY)
8th	Reading	26%	29%	42% (NJ)
8th	Math	25%	26%	35% (MA)

**Note:** Use caution when interpreting aggregated student achievement data. The makeup of the student population – including the percentages of economically disadvantaged students, students receiving special education services, and English learners – varies from state to state, and the performance of student subgroups is masked by aggregated achievement data.

For example, while Virginia’s percentage of students scoring at or above proficient in 8th grade reading was higher than North Carolina’s (31% to 26%), the percentage of English language learners scoring at or above proficient in 8th grade reading was higher in North Carolina than Virginia (7% to 1%).

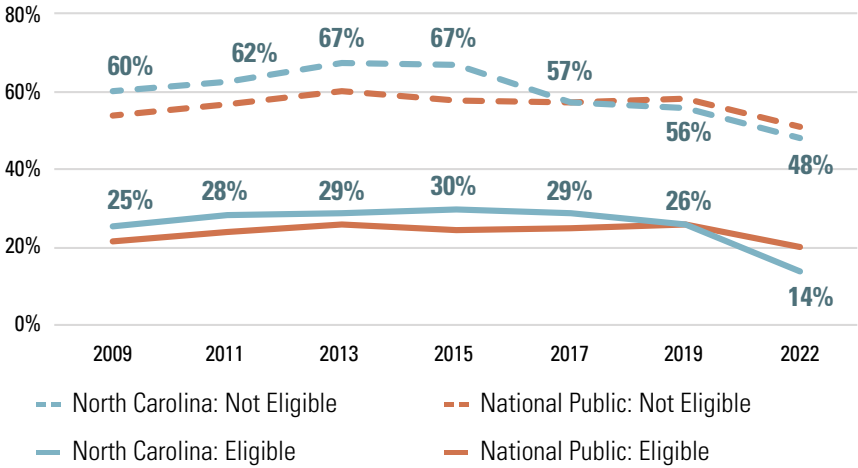
**Source:** [NAEP Data Explorer](#)

**32%** of North Carolina 4th grade students met proficiency standards on the 2022 NAEP reading assessment.

**Source:** [NAEP Data Explorer](#)

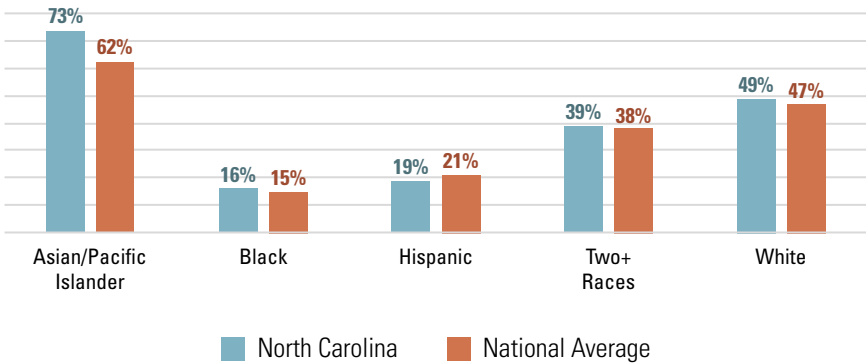


## NAEP 4th Grade Math Proficiency, by Free & Reduced Price Meal Eligibility (2009 to 2022)



Source: NAEP Data Explorer

## NAEP 4th Grade Math Proficiency, by Race/Ethnicity (2022)



**Note:** There were not enough Native American/Alaska Native students tested in North Carolina to meet reporting thresholds. Nationally, 19% of American Indian/Alaska Native students scored at or above proficient.

Source: NAEP Data Explorer

**25%** of North Carolina 8th grade students met proficiency standards on the 2022 NAEP math assessment.





## SPOTLIGHT ON:

# Return on Investment – Student Achievement and Education Expenditures

According to the US Chamber of Commerce, North Carolina has a relatively high return on investment for its education expenditures, but this analysis was limited because it focused solely on nominal expenditures and academic outcomes. BEST NC took this analysis a step further by comparing contextualized funding and student achievement data.

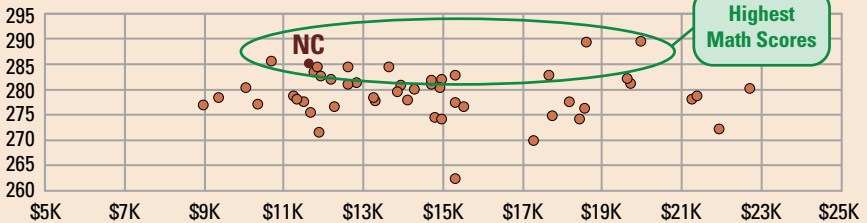
To do this, we compared the Urban Institute’s adjusted NAEP scores – which control for student demographics such as race, poverty, Special Education, and English language learner status – to cost of living-adjusted per pupil expenditures in each state for the 2015, 2017, and 2019 NAEP testing years (adjusted NAEP scores are not yet available for 2022). This analysis finds that North Carolina does indeed show a positive return on its investment, with adjusted NAEP scores in fourth grade reading and eighth grade math that consistently place in the top-10 states, despite cost of living-adjusted per pupil expenditure rankings around 40th in the country.

**Figure 1: North Carolina Adjusted Student Performance on NAEP Assessment and Cost-of-Living Adjusted per Pupil Expenditures (2015 to 2019)**

Year	Adjusted 4th Grade Reading Proficiency (Ranking)	Adjusted 8th Grade Math Proficiency (Ranking)	Cost of Living-Adjusted per Pupil Expenditures (Ranking)
2015	38% (3rd)	33% (6th)	\$9,630 (41st)
2017	39% (6th)	35% (13th)	\$10,053 (39th)
2019	36% (6th)	37% (4th)	\$10,930 (43rd)

Nationally, there is no correlation between cost-of-living-adjusted PPE and adjusted NAEP scores in reading or math, indicating a weak relationship between education expenditures, broadly, and student performance. However, the scatterplot does help to identify states with higher returns on investment, including North Carolina.

**Figure 2: Average Adjusted NAEP 8th Grade Math Scale Score vs. Average Cost of Living-Adjusted per Pupil Expenditures, by State (2019)**



Research has shown that the education expenditures that have the greatest impact on student achievement are those that relate directly to instruction, including the salaries and benefits of instructional personnel, as well as instructional materials and technology. North Carolina consistently ranks in the top-10 in the nation in the percentage of education expenditures that relate to instruction.

**62%**

**Percentage of North Carolina Education Expenditures Spent on Instruction from 2010 to 2019**

**6th**

**North Carolina’s Rank Among All States In Percentage of Education Expenditures Spent on Instruction from 2010 to 2019**

For more information, follow the QR code:



Source: US Chamber of Commerce: Leaders and Laggards Reports; Urban Institute: America’s Gradebook; National Education Association: Rankings and Estimates Reports; National Center for Education Statistics: Comparable Wage Index for Teachers



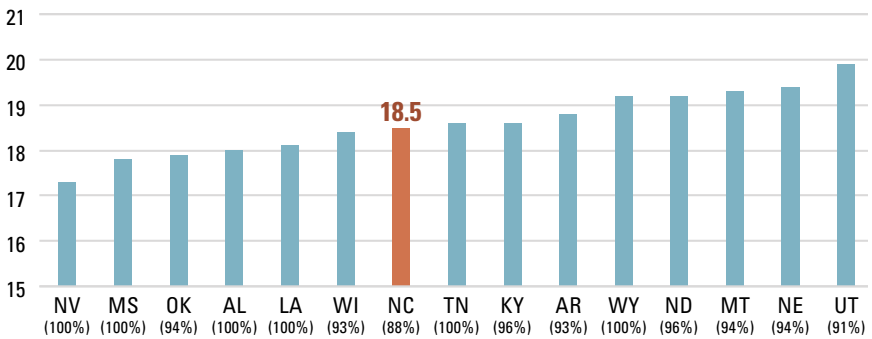
## SECTION 5: Achievement

### American College Testing (ACT)

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



### Average ACT Composite Score for States with 85% or Greater Participation\* (Graduating Class of 2022)



\*State participation percentages in parentheses.

Source: ACT 2022 Condition of College & Career Readiness Report



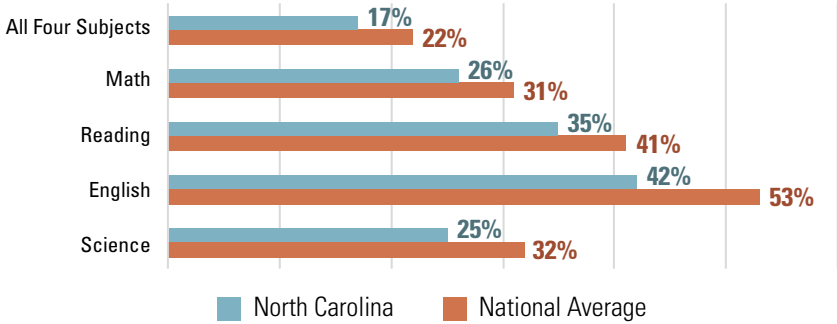
In 2021-22, 42% of 11th grade students in North Carolina scored **19 or above on the ACT** - which is the minimum entry score required for admission into UNC System institutions.

Source: NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports

**61%** of high school seniors with a CTE concentration earned at least a Silver Career Readiness Certificate on the ACT WorkKeys assessment in 2021-22.

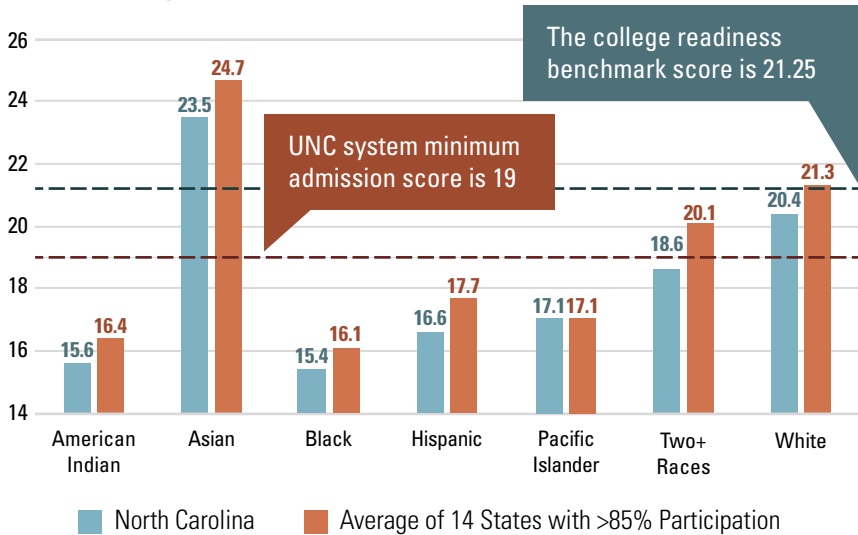


## High School Students Meeting College Readiness Benchmarks on the ACT, by Subject Area (Graduating Class of 2022)



Source: ACT High School Graduating Class Data Visualization Tool

## Average ACT Composite Score, by Race/Ethnicity (Graduating Class of 2022)



Source: ACT High School Graduating Class Data Visualization Tool

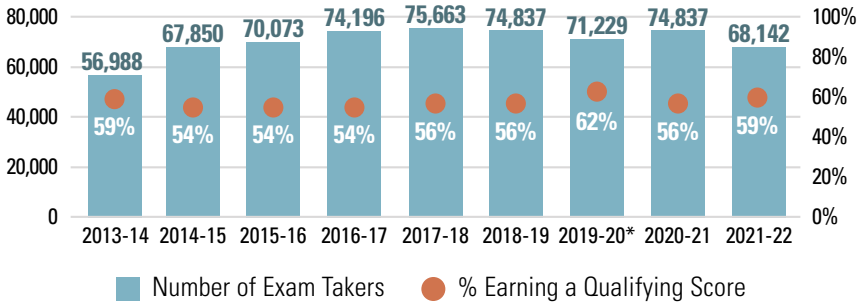
Only **21%** of economically disadvantaged students had a 19 or higher ACT composite score in 2021-22, compared to **49%** of non-economically disadvantaged students.

Source: NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports



SECTION 5: Achievement

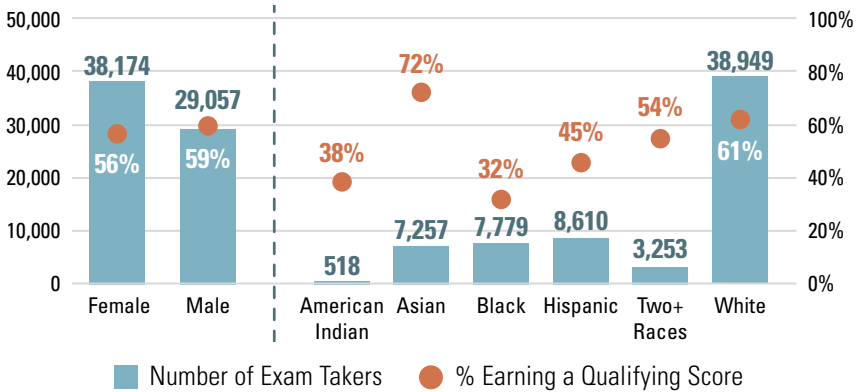
### Advanced Placement (AP) Exam Participation and Percentage Earning a Qualifying Score in K-12 Public Schools (2013-14 to 2021-22)



\*AP Exams were taken at home in 2019-20.

Source: NC DPI SAT and AP Reports

### AP Exam Participation and Percentage Earning a Qualifying Score in K-12 Public Schools, by Student Subgroup (2021-22)



Source: NC DPI SAT and AP Reports

57%

Earned a Qualifying Score on NC AP Exam in 2021-22

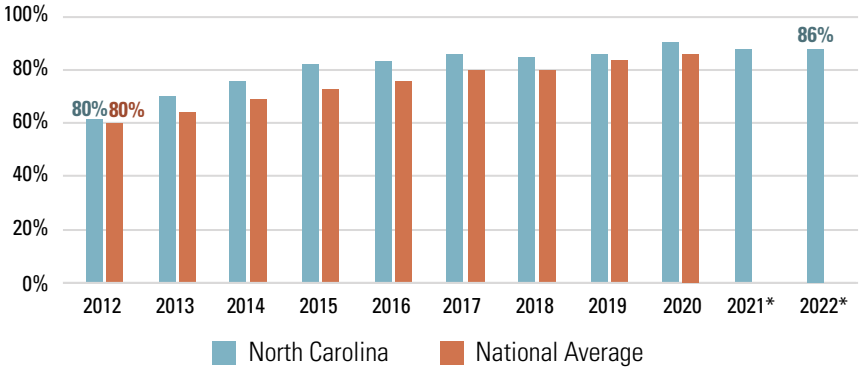
59%

Earned a Qualifying Score on Ntl. AP Exams in 2021-22

Source: NC DPI SAT and AP Reports



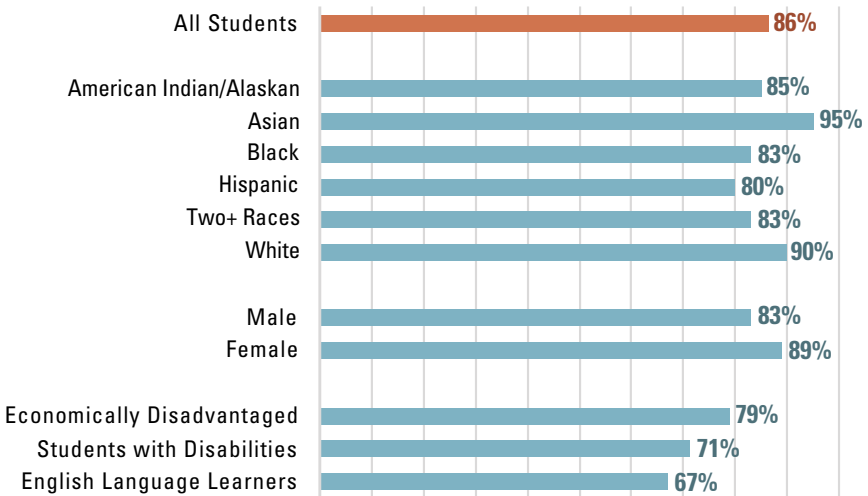
## K-12 Public High School Graduation Rates (Class of 2012 to Class of 2022)



\*National averages are not yet available.

**Source:** NC DPI Testing and School Accountability - 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate Report; NCES Digest of Education Statistics, Table 219.46

## K-12 Public High School Graduation Rates, by Student Subgroup (Class of 2022)



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



## SECTION 5: Achievement

### High School Diploma Integrity

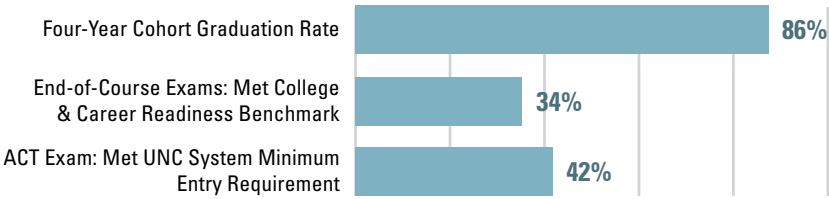
The four-year cohort graduation rate in North Carolina public schools increased from **74%** in 2010 to **86%** in 2022. The integrity of North Carolina’s high school diploma is called into question when high school graduation rates are compared with ACT scores and End-of-Course exam proficiency. The majority of students graduate without achieving college and career ready standards in math, English, and biology, and without meeting the minimum ACT score required for admission into UNC System universities, with greater disparities for economically disadvantaged students.

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

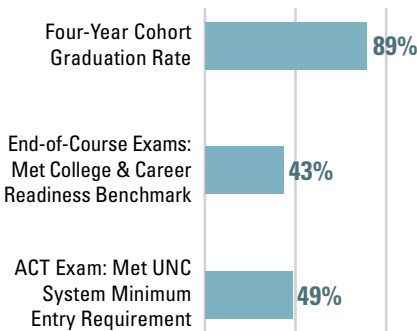


### Public High School Graduation Rates vs. Postsecondary Readiness, by Student Subgroup (Graduating Class of 2022)

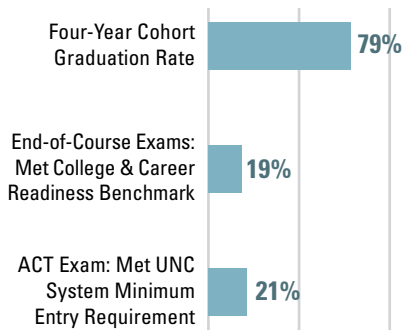
#### All Students



#### Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students



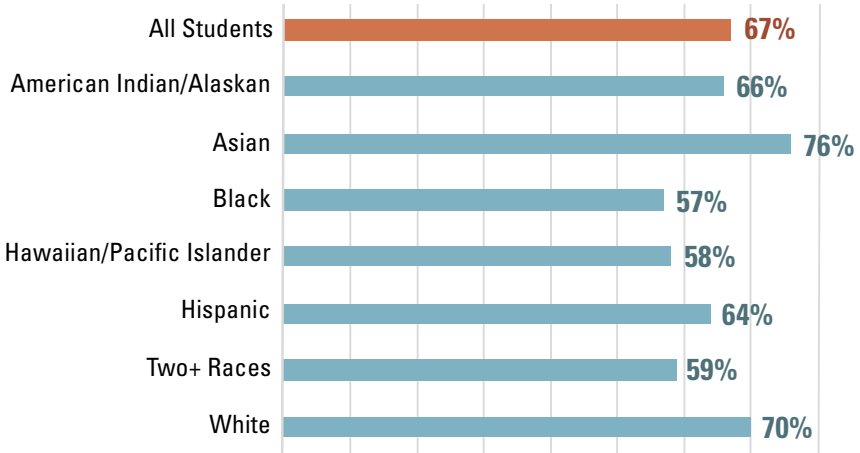
#### Economically Disadvantaged Students



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



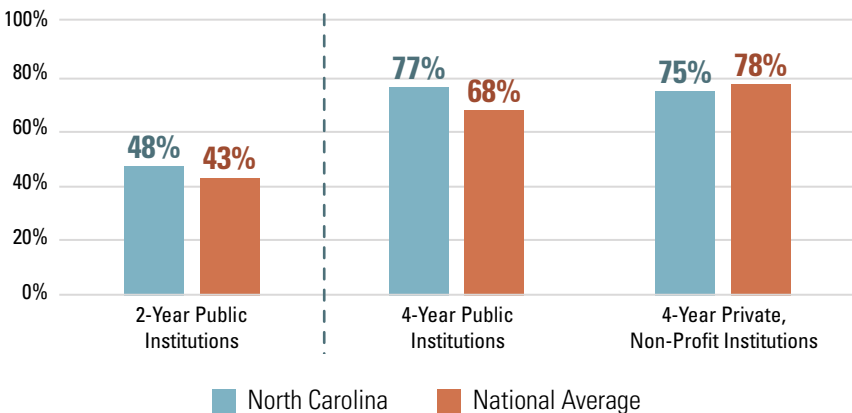
## First Year Progression Rate\* in the North Carolina Community College System, by Race/Ethnicity (Fall 2020)



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

Source: North Carolina Community College System Analytics and Reporting

## Six-Year Higher Education Graduation Rates (Fall 2016 Cohort)

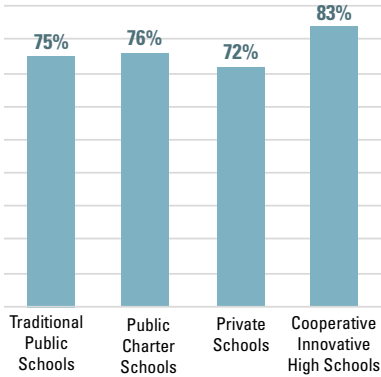


Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center - Completing College National and State Reports 2022



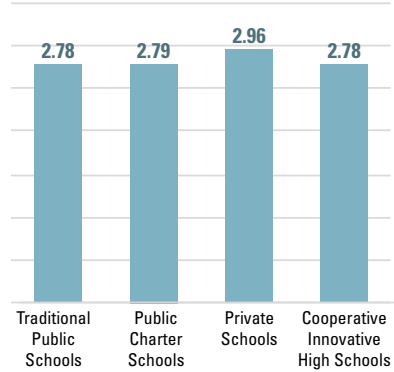
**SECTION 5: Achievement**

### UNC System Acceptance Rates, by Incoming High School Type (Fall 2022)



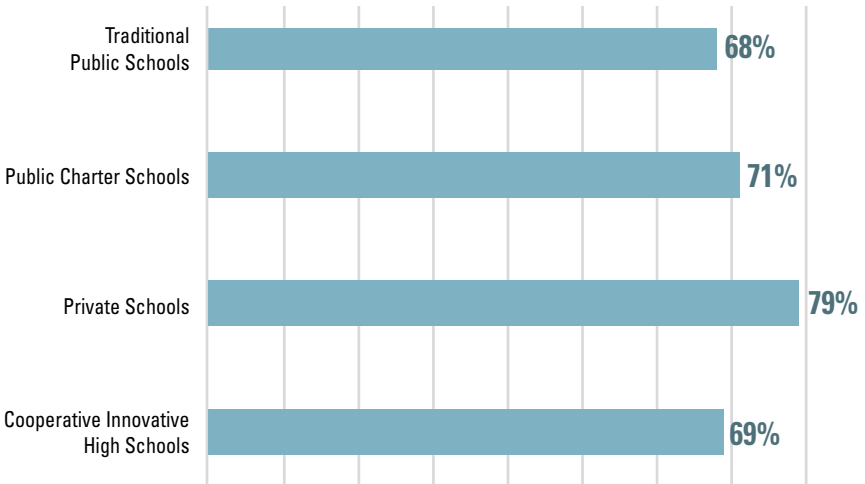
Source: UNC InfoCenter

### UNC System First Year GPA, by Incoming High School Type (Fall 2021)



Source: UNC InfoCenter

### UNC System Six-Year Graduation Rates, by Incoming High School Type (2016 Cohort)



Source: UNC InfoCenter





## UNC System Enrollment and Six-Year Graduation Rates of First-Time Students Attending Full-Time (2016 Cohort)

	Enrollment	Graduation Rate
Appalachian State University	3,125	75%
East Carolina University	4,320	65%
Elizabeth City State University	203	42%
Fayetteville State University	647	43%
NC A&T State University	1,969	56%
NC Central University	1,154	44%
NC State University	4,269	86%
UNC Asheville	669	59%
UNC Chapel Hill	4,228	91%
UNC Charlotte	3,453	70%
UNC Greensboro	2,864	58%
UNC Pembroke	1,091	45%
UNC School of the Arts	212	82%
UNC Wilmington	2,223	74%
Western Carolina University	1,925	60%
Winston-Salem State University	952	49%
<b>UNC System Total</b>	<b>33,260</b>	<b>69%</b>

Source: [UNC InfoCenter](#)

At **91%**, UNC Chapel Hill has the highest six-year graduation rate within the UNC system for full-time students attending for the first time.

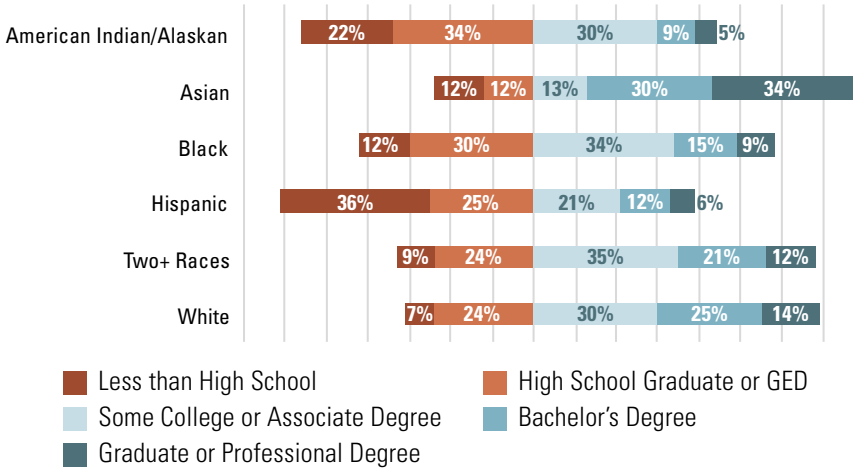
Source: [UNC InfoCenter](#)



## SECTION 5: Achievement



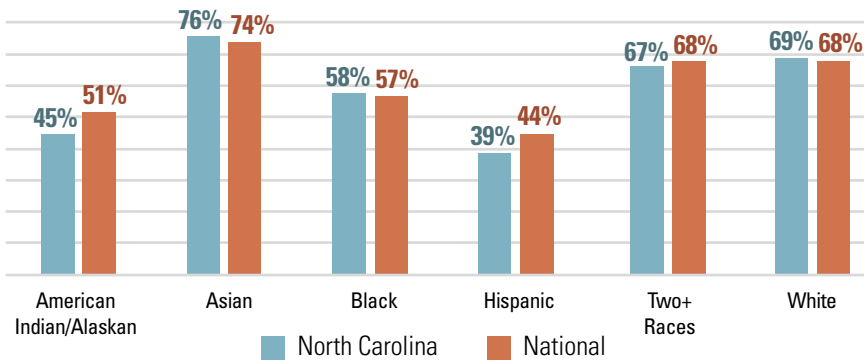
### Educational Attainment of Adults Ages 25 and Older, by Race/Ethnicity (2021)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2021), American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table S0201



### Adults Ages 25 and Older with Any Postsecondary Education, by Race/Ethnicity (2021)



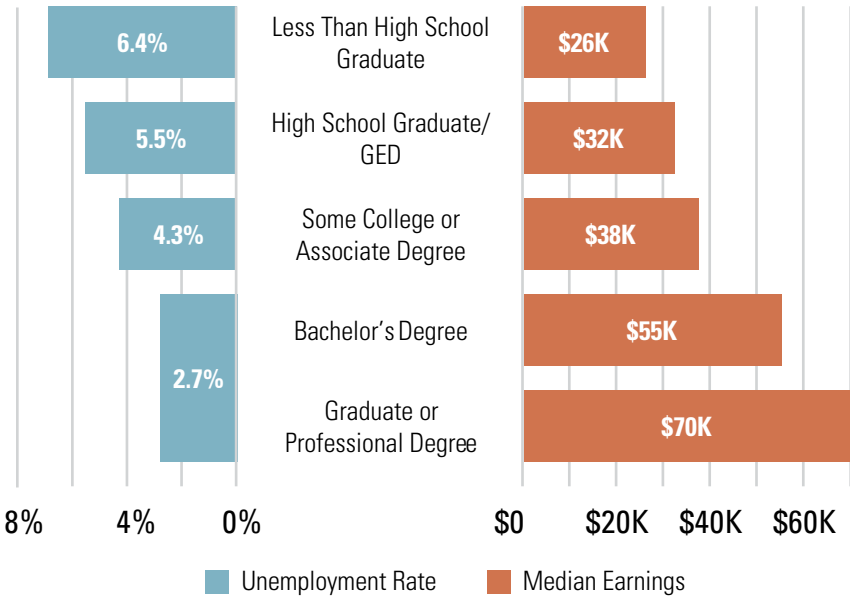
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2021), American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table S0201

# 36%

of Hispanic adults and 12% of Black adults over the age of 25 have less than a high school diploma, compared to 7% of White adults over the age of 25.



## Unemployment Rate and Median Earnings of Adults Age 25 and Older, by Educational Attainment (2021)



**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau (2021), American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table B20004; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment, 2021 - Table 15

**35%** of North Carolina residents age 25 and older held a bachelor's degree or higher, and 65% had some post-secondary education in 2021.

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau (2019), American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table S0201



## Our Vision

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

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

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