

K-12 Education in North Carolina

Geoff Coltrane, Sr. Education Advisor
Office of the Governor



Constitutional Guarantee to a Sound, Basic Education

The people have a right to the privilege of education, and it is the duty of the State to guard and maintain that right.

North Carolina State Constitution, Article I, Sec. 15



Types of K-12 Schools in NC

- Public Schools
 - Schools within Local Education Agencies (LEAs)
 - Charter Schools
 - Regional and Laboratory Schools
- Non-Public Schools
 - Private Schools
 - Home Schools



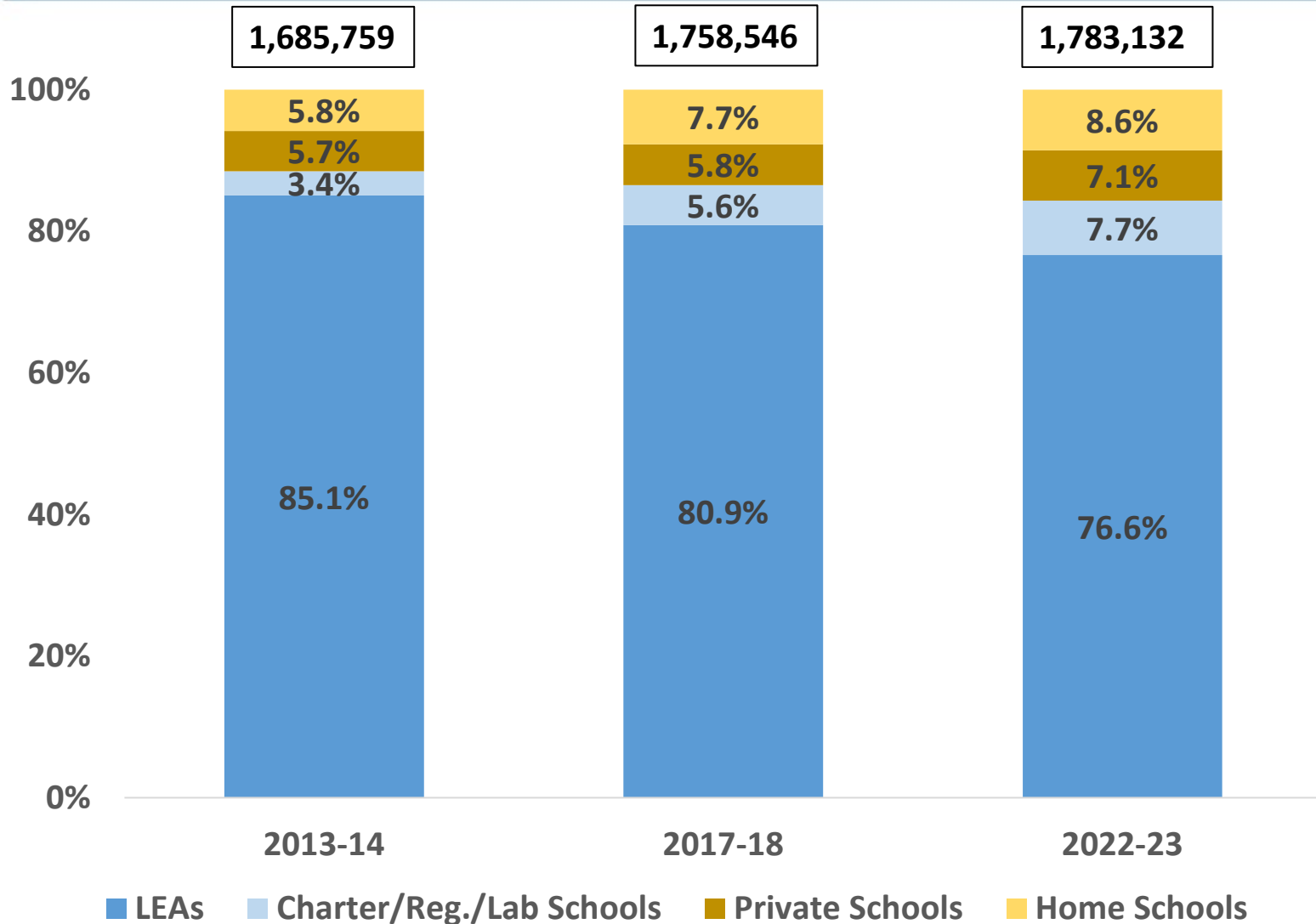
Types of K-12 Schools in NC

Type of School	No. of Students (2022-23)	No. of Schools (2022-23)	State Funding?
Public Schools			
Schools within LEAs	1,366,507	2,484 (across 115 LEAs)	Yes
Charter/Reg./Lab Schools	Charter: 135,748 Reg./Lab: 1,392	Charter: 206 Reg./Lab: 10	Yes
Non-Public Schools			
Private Schools	126,768	884	Opportunity Scholarships for students
Home Schools	152,717	94,154	No

Sources: NCDPI, 2022-23 Final ADM; NCDOA, NC Statistical Summary for Private Schools; NCDOA, NC Home School Statistical History



Student Enrollment



Sources: NCDPI, 2022-23 Final ADM; NCDPI, Statistical Profile Table 1 and 3; NCDOA, Statistical Summary for Private Schools; NCDOA, NC Home School Statistical History



Governance of K-12 Schools

Type of School	Oversight Agency	Accountability	Teacher Licensure?	Standards/ Curriculum
<i>Public Schools</i>				
Schools within LEAs	State Board of Ed/NCDPI	State Assessments	All teachers	NC Standard Course of Study
Charter/Reg./ Lab Schools	State Board of Ed/NCDPI	State Assessments	50% of teachers	NC Standard Course of Study
<i>Non-Public Schools</i>				
Private Schools	DOA Div. of Non-Public Ed.	Admin. nationally-normed tests	No requirements	No requirements
Home Schools	DOA Div. of Non-Public Ed.	Admin. nationally-normed tests	No requirements	No requirements



Requirements for NC K-12 Non-Public Schools

1. Report its name, address, and names of its chief administrator and owner(s) to the Division of Non-Public Education (DNPE).
2. Meet the state fire safety and sanitation standards established by state and local authorities.
3. Operate for a school term of at least nine calendar months on a regular schedule excluding reasonable holidays and vacations.
4. Keep accurate student attendance records on file at its office.
5. Maintain current and accurate disease immunization records on file at its office for each pupil enrolled.



Requirements for NC K-12 Non-Public Schools

6. Administer a nationally standardized achievement test and keep test results on file at the school for at least one calendar year for the following:
 - a. Subject areas of English grammar, reading, spelling and math to all 3rd and 6th grade students;
 - b. Subject areas of English grammar, reading, spelling, and mathematics, and competencies in the verbal and quantitative areas to all 9th grade students;
 - c. Competencies in the verbal and quantitative areas to all 11th grade students.



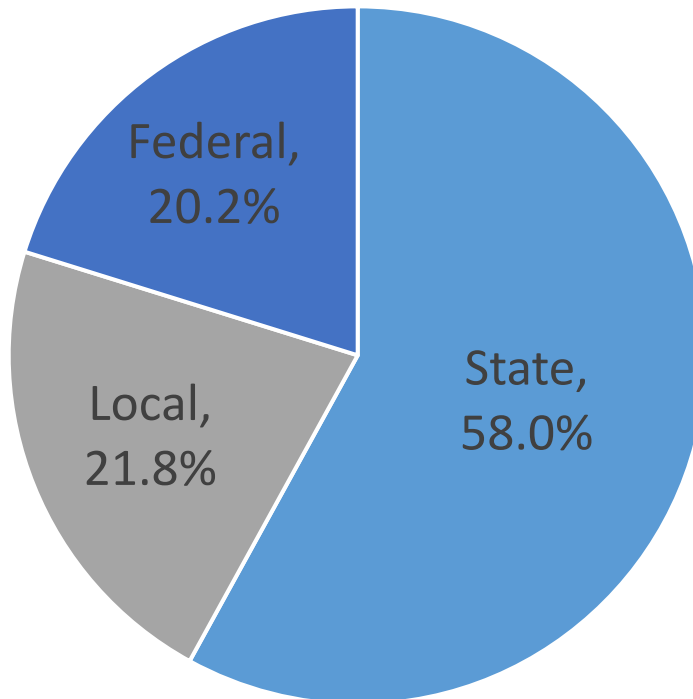
Requirements for NC K-12 Non-Public Schools

7. Issue Driving Eligibility Certificates to its age 15-17 students who are making progress toward graduation, exhibiting exemplary behavior, and who request them in order to obtain their North Carolina Learner's Permit/Driver's License.
8. Provide industrial quality eye protective devices free of charge to students and teachers participating in shop or laboratory classes involving hazardous materials
9. Notify DNPE upon termination of the school.
10. Satisfy child care requirements which may apply if a nursery or pre-kindergarten program is also operated.



Overview of Investments in K-12 Public Education

Sources of NC K-12 Education Funding FY 2021-22



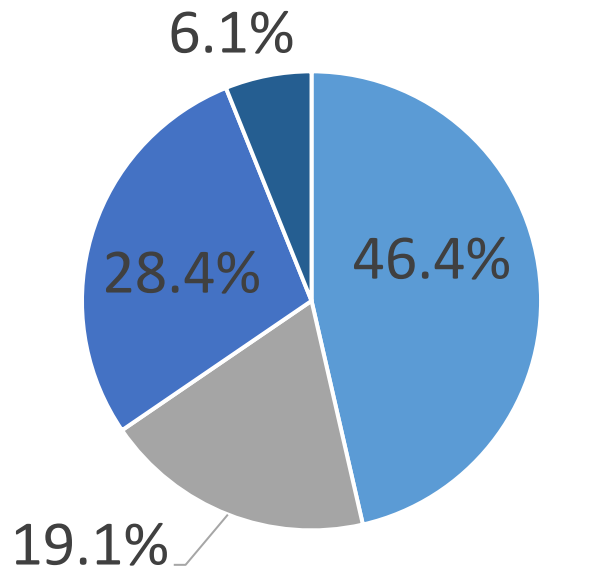
In FY 2018-19, before the investment of federal COVID funds, the share of K-12 education funding was

- State – 63.4%
- Local – 26.4%
- Federal – 10.2%



Overview of Investments in K-12 Public Education

State K-12 Education Expenditures for School Districts, FY 2021-22

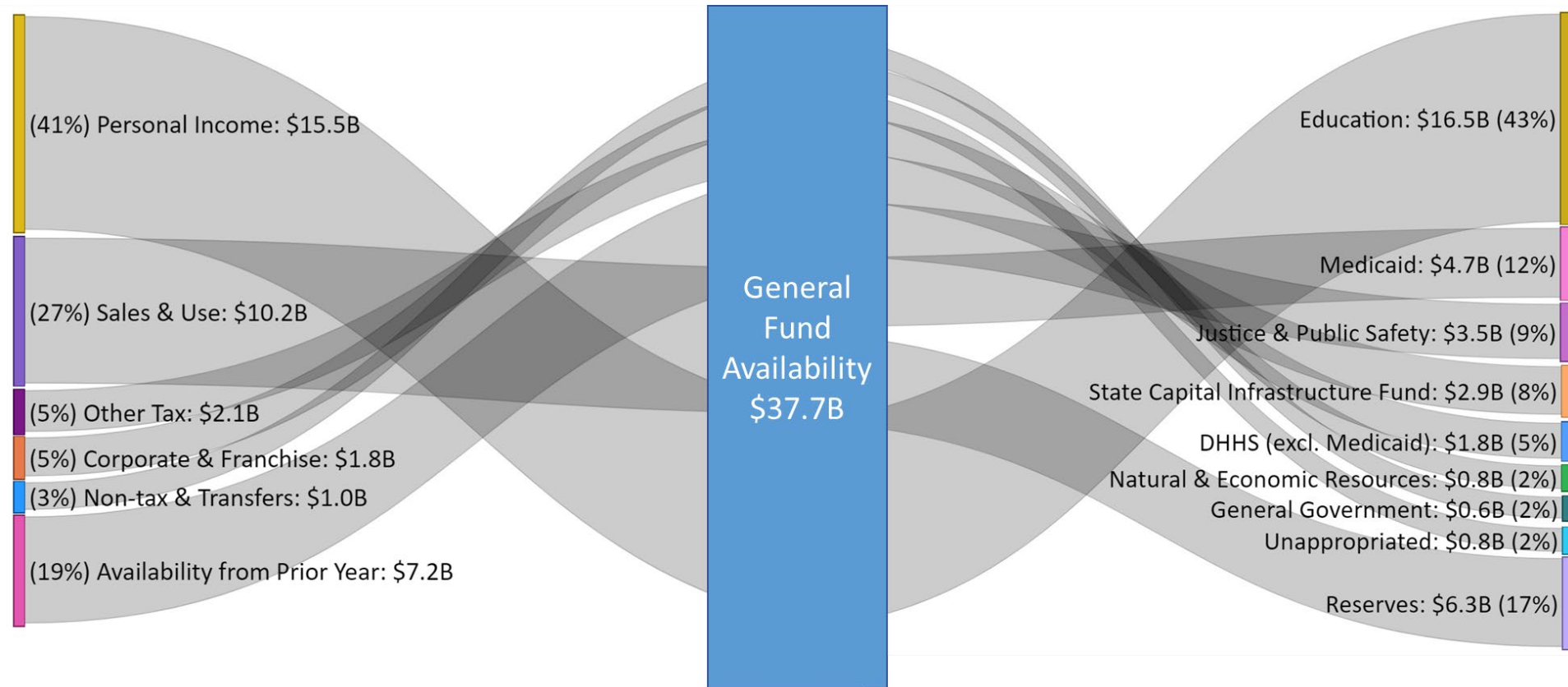


More than 90% of state K-12 funds in 2021-22 were spent on salaries and benefits for educators

- Teacher and Instructional Support Salaries
- All Other Salaries
- Benefits
- Purchased Services, Supplies and Materials, Capital, Other



Sources and Uses of General Fund Revenue: FY 2022-23





Not All School Districts Are Created Equal . . .

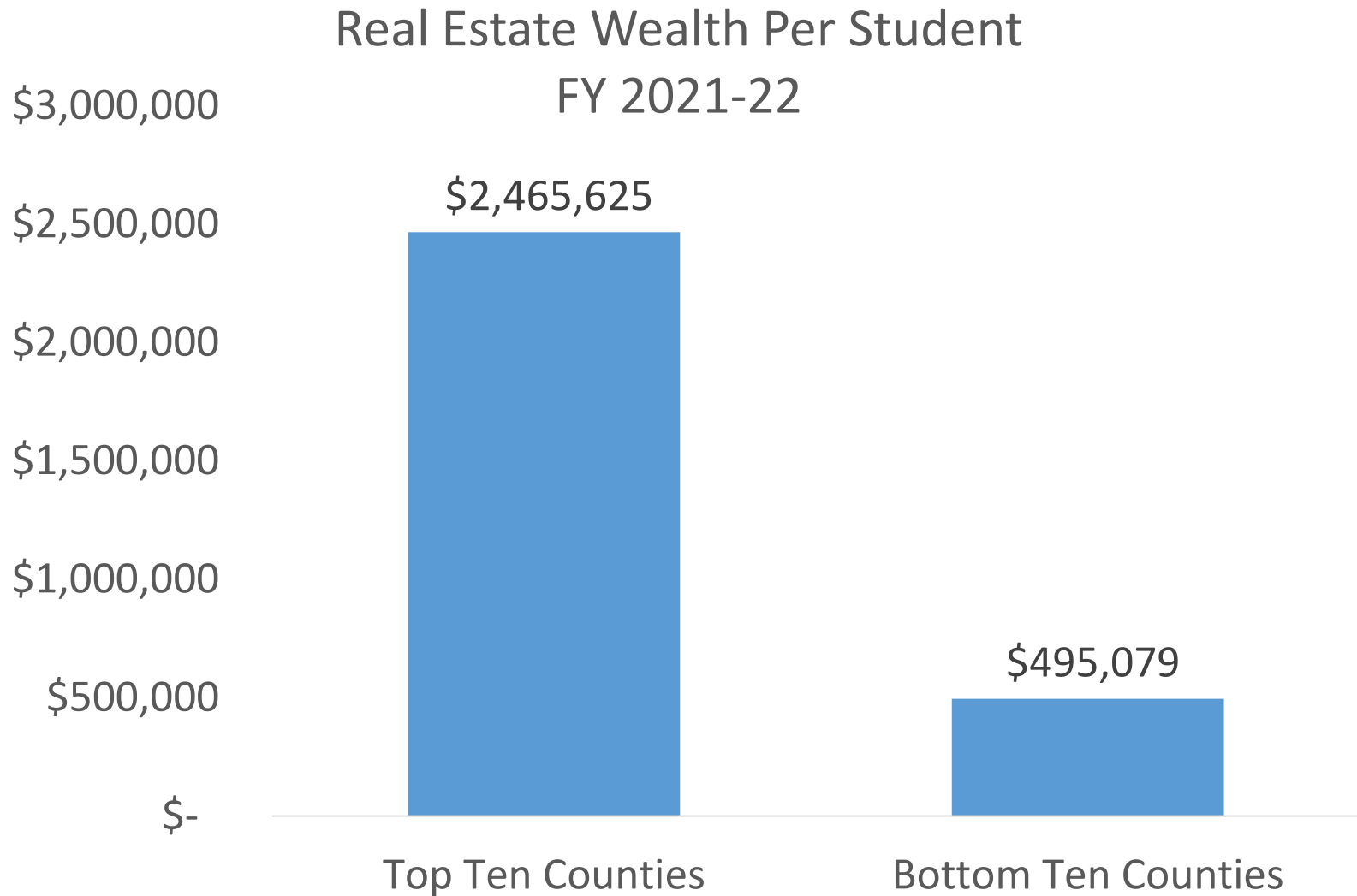
In 2022-23,

- Largest school district by enrollment was Wake County (157,847 students)
- Smallest school district by enrollment was Hyde County (451 students)
- Two largest school districts (Wake and Charlotte-Mecklenburg) served 21.8% of all students in school districts
- Ten largest school districts served 46.7% of all students in school districts
- Average school district size was 11,882
- Median school district size was 5,369

Sources: NCDPI, 2022-23 Final ADM



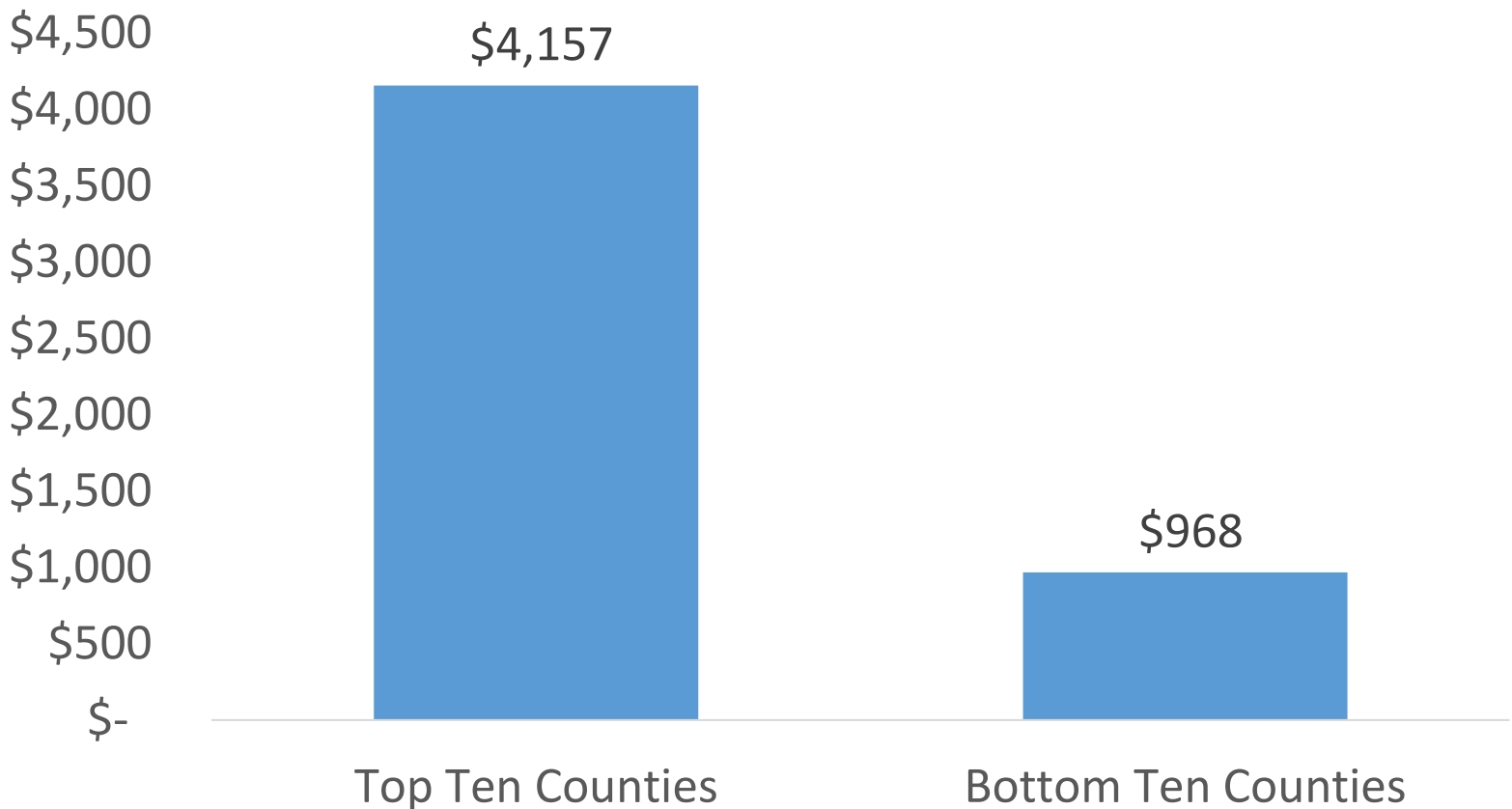
Local Funding for K-12 Public Schools





Local Funding for K-12 Public Schools

Average Local Spending Per Student
FY 2021-22





Leandro v. State of NC

- Lawsuit filed in 1994 by five low-wealth school districts (Hoke, Halifax, Robeson, Vance and Cumberland)
- Suit claimed that districts did not have enough money to provide an equal education to their students
- NC Supreme Court ruled in 1997 that state's students have a constitutional right to a "sound, basic education"



Leandro v. State of NC – “Sound Basic Education”

“We conclude that Article I, Section 15 and Article IX, Section 2 of the North Carolina Constitution combine to guarantee every child of this state an opportunity to receive a sound basic education in our public schools. For purposes of our Constitution, a ‘sound basic education’ is one that will provide the student with at least:

- (1) sufficient ability to read, write, and speak the English language and a sufficient knowledge of fundamental mathematics and physical science to enable the student to function in a complex and rapidly changing society;
- (2) sufficient fundamental knowledge of geography, history, and basic economic and political systems to enable the student to make informed choices with regard to issues that affect the student personally or affect the student's community, state, and nation;
- (3) sufficient academic and vocational skills to enable the student to successfully engage in post-secondary education or vocational training; and
- (4) sufficient academic and vocational skills to enable the student to compete on an equal basis with others in further formal education or gainful employment in contemporary society.”

Leandro v. State, 346 N.C. 336, 488 S.E.2d 249 (1997)



Opportunity Scholarship Program

- The Opportunity Scholarship Program was established by the General Assembly in 2013 and began providing awards to students in the 2014-15 school year
- Program originally provided awards of up to \$4,200 per student for a family with an income of 133% of the amount required to qualify for free and reduced-price lunch
- Student had to be previously enrolled in a public school or be a rising kindergartner



Opportunity Scholarship Program

- In recent years, General Assembly has changed eligibility requirements and award amounts
 - Increased income eligibility requirement in 2020 to 150% and then to 175% in 2021
 - Increased award amount to 90% of state per pupil public school funding in the previous fiscal year in 2021 (from \$4,200 per year to \$6,168 in 2022-23)
 - Added 1st and 2nd grade students to those that did not have to have previously attended a public school
- For the 2023-24 school year, the program currently provides awards of up to 90% of the state average per pupil allotment per year (\$6,492 for the 2023-24 school year) to cover tuition and fees at eligible private schools
- Administered by the NC State Education Assistance Authority (SEAA)



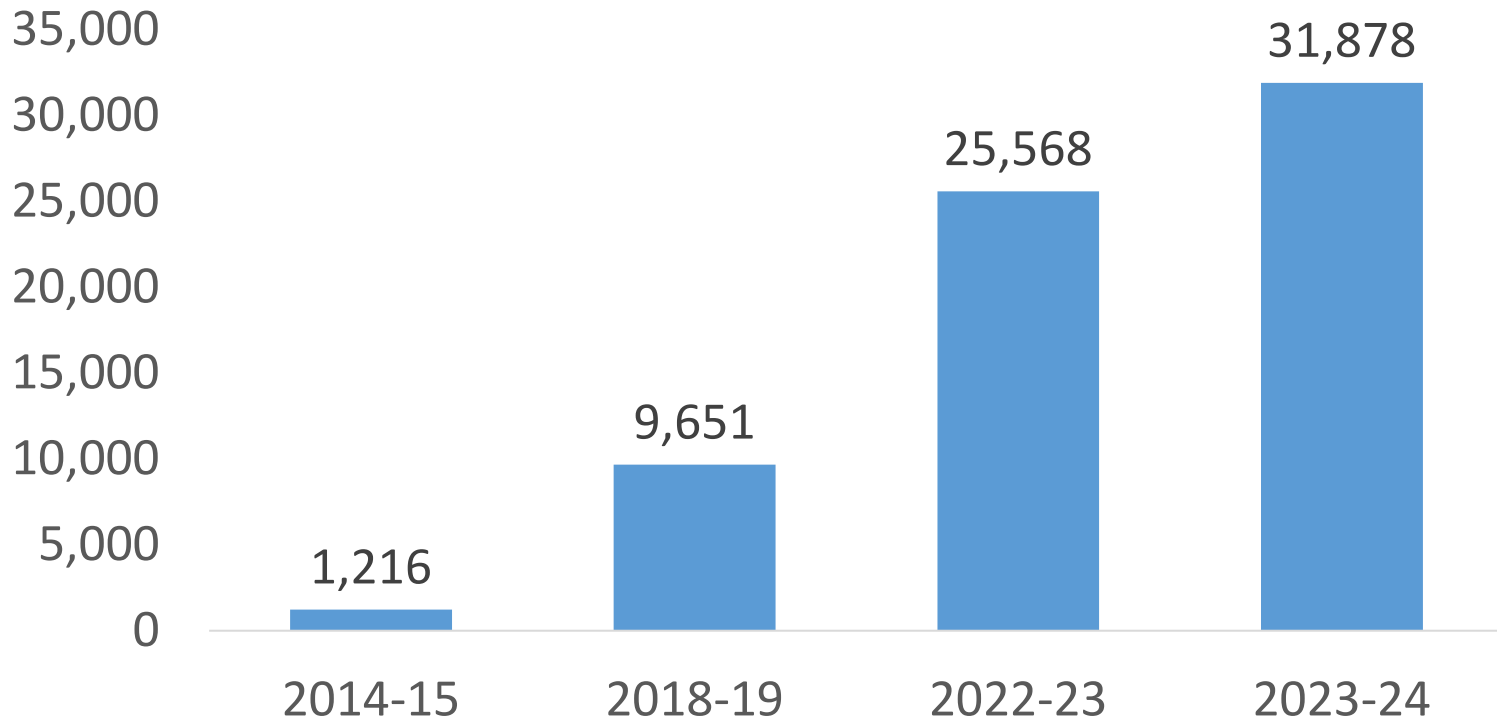
Opportunity Scholarship Program – Requirements for Non-Public Schools

- Provide SEAA with documentation for required tuition and fees
- Conduct a criminal background check for the staff member with the highest decision-making authority for the school
- Provide to the parent or guardian of an OS student an annual written explanation of the student's progress, including the student's scores on standardized achievement tests
- Administer, at least once in each school year, a nationally standardized test to all OS students (if school serves 25 or more OS students, then aggregate test scores must be reported to SEAA)
- Provide to SEAA graduation rates of OS students
- Contract with a certified public accountant to perform a financial review for each school year in which the school enrolls 70 or more OS students



Opportunity Scholarship Program

Total Number of Opportunity Scholarship Recipients



Total Amt. of Awards	\$4,635,320	\$37,988,912	\$134,639,138	NA
----------------------	-------------	--------------	---------------	----

Source: NCSEAA



Opportunity Scholarship Program

- In 2023, General Assembly expanded the program to allow any student regardless of income or if they have previously attended a public school to be eligible for a voucher
- Changes take effect for the 2024-25 school year



Opportunity Scholarship Program

Estimated 2024-25 Household Income Eligibility Guidelines and Award Amounts for a Family of Four

Household Income	Award Amount
Up to \$55,500	\$7,213
Up to \$111,000	\$6,492
Up to \$249,750	\$4,328
Above \$249,750	\$3,246

Source: NCSEAA



Education Savings Accounts

- North Carolina's Education Student Accounts (ESA+) program provides awards to support the needs of students with disabilities.
- Students must have documentation of a disability to be eligible
- Funds may be used to pay tuition and fees for eligible private schools, and for expenses such as speech therapy, tutoring services, and educational technology.
- \$9,000 annual award; students with certain designated disabilities may be eligible to receive \$17,000 a year
- Families may choose from a variety of learning environments, including private schools, home schools, or co-enrollment



Q and A