

Legislative
Bulletin

**NORTH CAROLINA
COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**



**An Unwavering Commitment to
North Carolina Public Schools**



Faith and Public Education

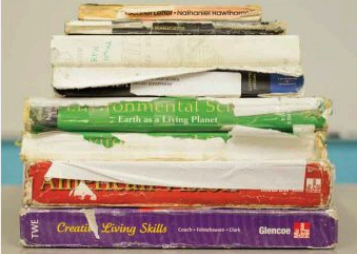
What scripture says about education:

- Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray. Proverbs 22:6
- We all have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach... Romans 12:6-7
- God has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8

FULLY FUND PUBLIC EDUCATION

MY PEOPLE ARE DESTROYED FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE.
HOSEA 4:6

NC Council of Churches: 18 Denominations; 6,200 Congregations



The Council's View on Public Schools

The Council has a long history of support for public education. In 1986, we reaffirmed "our support for the system of public education in North Carolina... Being a system of our government financed by public funds, responsive to the community as a whole, and open to all without distinctions as to race, creed, national origin or economic status."

In 2006, the Council again reaffirmed support "for the public schools as one of society's primary vehicles for social, racial, and economic justice."

In 2017, we recommitted to educating and advocating about these issues with our elected officials and throughout our member denominations and congregations.

We call on our elected leaders at the state and local levels to provide adequate funding to the public schools, especially those affected by the Leandro decision, which calls on the N.C. General Assembly to guarantee every child of this state an opportunity to receive a sound basic education in our public schools.

The North Carolina Council of Churches is dedicated to promoting a public school system that prioritizes racial equity and strives for excellence for every student.

Public Education in North Carolina

NORTH CAROLINA RANKS

46

IN THE NATION
FOR BEGINNING
TEACHER PAY

39

IN THE NATION
FOR AVERAGE
TEACHER SALARY¹

The national average for per-pupil expenditures for 2021-22 fall enrollment was **\$15,047**.

North Carolina's expenditures per pupil were **\$11,651**.²

Around **8%** of NC's **1.55** million school children attend charter schools³

NC'S BUDGET FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS HAS GROWN FROM JUST OVER **\$16 MILLION** IN 1997 TO MORE THAN **\$848 MILLION** FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR⁴

*Peer-reviewed studies of North Carolina's charter schools have shown that charters continue to exacerbate the segregation of public schools.*⁵

In 2021-22, \$79.5 million was spent on Opportunity Scholarship (OS) vouchers. The funds spent increased to over \$130 million in 2022-23.⁶

The Leandro Plan

A sound, basic education is the constitutional right of every child.

The Leandro Plan aims to tackle issues of inequality and insufficient funding that hinder access to various services and programs, such as:

- **early education (birth to age 5)**
- **qualified educators & principals**
- **safe facilities with modern technology**
- **support staff (school nurses, psychologists)**
- **academic and language specialists**
- **enrichment programs and career training**

The N.C. General Assembly is responsible for **setting policy and making budget decisions regarding public schools in North Carolina**. Through their actions, they can address the needs of public schools and uphold educational standards.

Support Public Education

Passing public education policies and adequately funding public education in North Carolina will yield far-reaching benefits, extending beyond the immediate realms of students and teachers to positively impact the entire community. By investing in education, we empower students with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to society as future leaders, professionals, and engaged citizens. It is crucial to address the negative impacts of school voucher programs, which divert public funds to private institutions, potentially undermining the resources available to public schools. Such programs can exacerbate educational inequalities, limit accountability, and hinder the collective progress of our communities.

By prioritizing education and providing ample resources, we nurture a well-educated workforce, drive innovation, and build a foundation for a prosperous and equitable future for all residents of North Carolina.

Proposed solutions:

- Fully fund public schools in accordance with the Leandro Plan
- Repair the teacher pipeline by increasing teacher base pay
- Increase accountability and transparency in all charter schools and private schools receiving public funds.
- Place a moratorium on funding school voucher programs
- Increase teacher salaries to the national average
- Increase per-pupil funding to the national average
- Increase funding to hire more professionals such as school psychologists, social workers, counselors, and nurses
- Support policies that ensure safe, secure, welcoming, and respectful schools for all of our diverse students and educators.



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1. National Education Association, Teacher Pay and Per Student Spending, 2022

2. NEA, Rankings of the States 2021 and Estimates of School Statistics 2022

3, 4. Public Schools First, The Facts in Charter Schools, March 2023

5. NC Justice Center, Still Stymied, December 2022

6. Public Schools First, StopNCSchoolVoucherExpansion, 2023