GENERATED ON APRIL 28, 2026

Trends in Academic Performance in North Carolina

VERSION 2025.1

This report summarizes district-level educational outcomes using data from the Stanford Education Data Archive (SEDA) from 2009-2025. Figures may contain gaps where source data are unavailable.

For more information, please visit edopportunity.org

Report created by the Educational Opportunity Project at Stanford University in collaboration with the Education Scorecard at Harvard University, using data provided by the National Center for Education Statistics and the Education Data Center. See final page for full information on data sources.

North Carolina

Average Grade 3-8 Test Scores, 2022-2025, by State Socioeconomic Status

Average test scores in grades 3-8 reflect the set of educational opportunities available to students in the district, including those provided by their families, preschools, neighborhoods, and elementary and middle schools.

Note: each bubble is a U.S. state, with size proportional to state enrollment. State socioeconomic status is a composite measure of average family income, parental education, poverty rate, SNAP eligibility rate, unemployment rate, and female-headed household rate. Test scores are measured in grade levels relative to the 2019 national average.

Average Test Scores and Trends, 2022-2025

ALL STUDENTS

	2022-2025 Average Scores	2022-2025 Trend in Test Scores
North Carolina	-0.39	-0.02
National Average	-0.46	0.00

Test scores are reported in grade level units, relative to the 2019 national average. For example, the first row above reads: "Students in North Carolina performed 0.39 grade levels below the 2019 national average. Test scores in North Carolina have been changing at a rate of -0.02 grade levels/year since 2022."

STUDENT SUBGROUPS

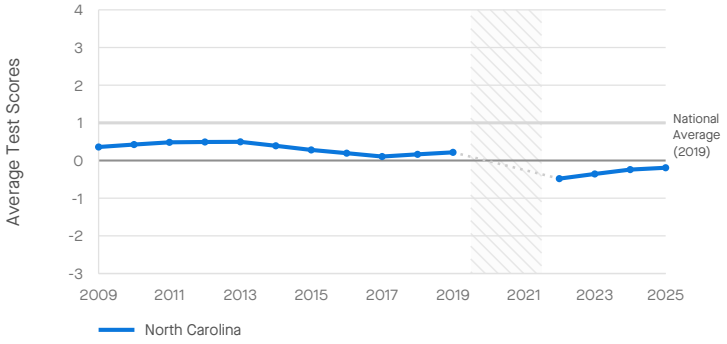
	2022-2025 Average Scores	2022-2025 Trend in Test Scores
White	0.90	-0.05
Black	-2.03	-0.02
Hispanic	-1.51	-0.13
Asian	3.05	-0.07
Poor	-1.74	-0.02
Non-Poor	1.02	0.05
Female	-0.36	-0.08
Male	-0.40	-0.05

North Carolina

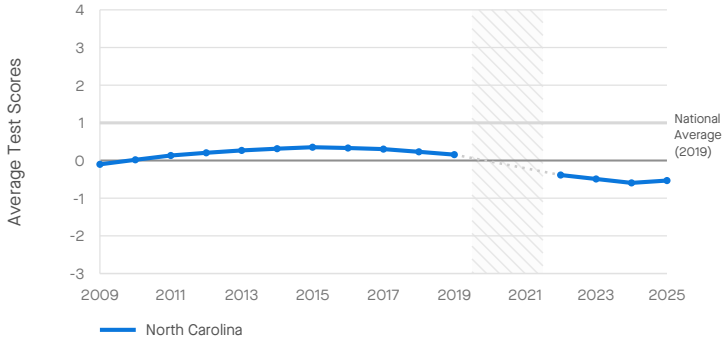
Trends in Average Grade 3-8 Test Scores, 2009-2025, by Subject and Student Subgroup

Trends in test scores may reflect changes in school quality, changes in demographics, and/or changes in out-of-school educational opportunities.

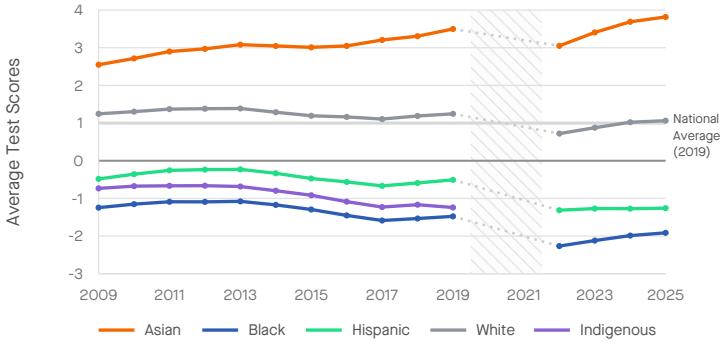
Trend in Math Scores (All Students)



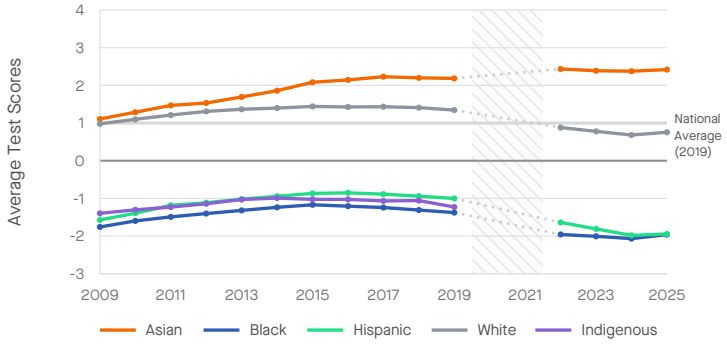
Trend in Reading Scores (All Students)



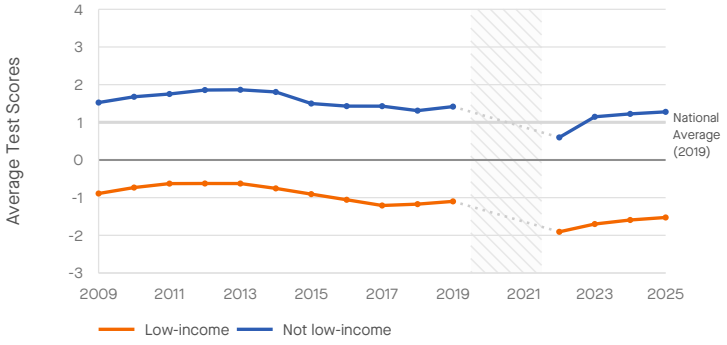
Trend in Math Scores, by Student Race/Ethnicity



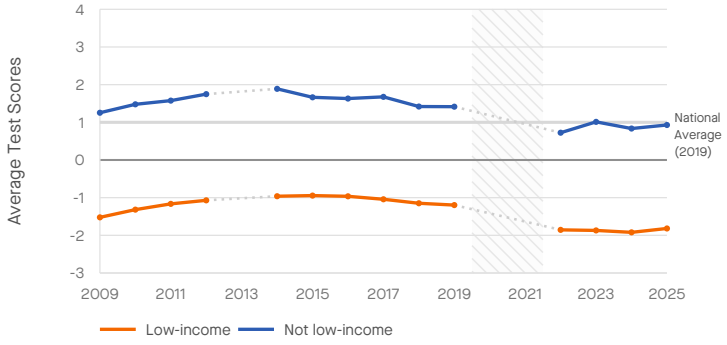
Trend in Reading Scores, by Student Race/Ethnicity



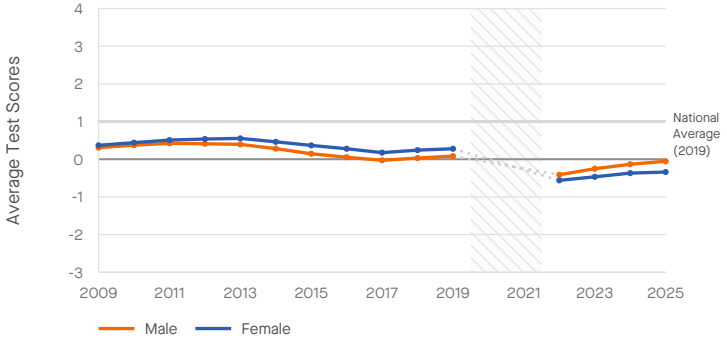
Trend in Math Scores, by Student Income Level



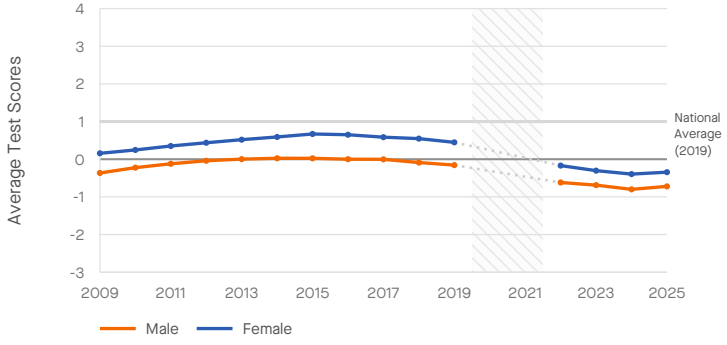
Trend in Reading Scores, by Student Income Level



Trend in Math Scores, by Student Gender



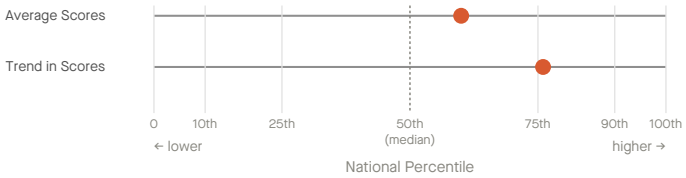
Trend in Reading Scores, by Student Gender



North Carolina

Academic Performance Rankings, 2022-2025, Relative to Other States in the U.S.

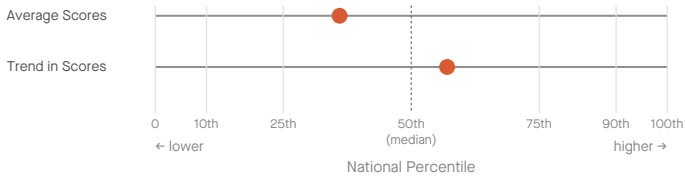
Math Ranks



	Average	Trend
North Carolina	21 / 51 (60th pct)	13 / 51 (76th pct)

North Carolina ranked higher than 60% of states nationwide in average math performance during the 2022-25 school years (21st of 51 states with available data).

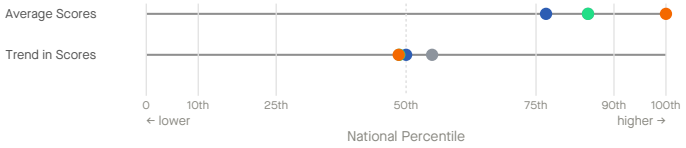
Reading Ranks



	Average	Trend
North Carolina	33 / 51 (36th pct)	23 / 51 (57th pct)

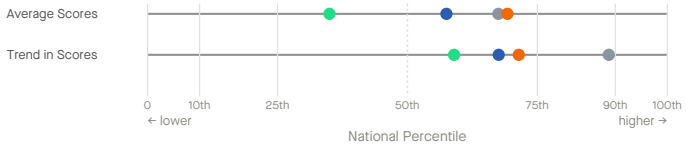
North Carolina ranked higher than 36% of states nationwide in average reading performance during the 2022-25 school years (33rd of 51 states with available data).

Math Ranks by Race/Ethnicity



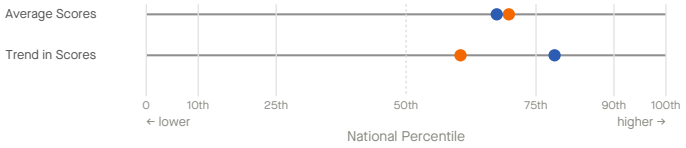
	Average	Trend
White	7 / 41 (85th pct)	19 / 41 (55th pct)
Black	10 / 40 (77th pct)	19 / 37 (50th pct)
Hispanic	7 / 41 (85th pct)	21 / 39 (49th pct)
Asian	1 / 40 (100th pct)	19 / 36 (49th pct)

Reading Ranks by Race/Ethnicity



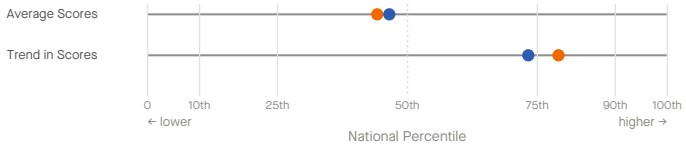
	Average	Trend
White	14 / 41 (68th pct)	6 / 41 (89th pct)
Black	18 / 41 (57th pct)	13 / 38 (68th pct)
Hispanic	27 / 41 (35th pct)	17 / 40 (59th pct)
Asian	13 / 40 (69th pct)	11 / 36 (71st pct)

Math Ranks by Income



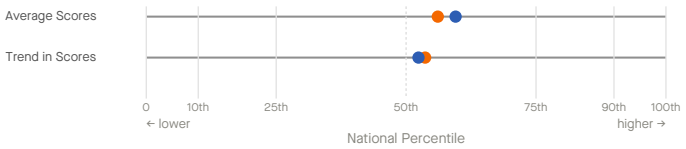
	Average	Trend
Low-income	14 / 44 (70th pct)	18 / 44 (60th pct)
Not low-income	15 / 44 (67th pct)	10 / 43 (79th pct)

Reading Ranks by Income



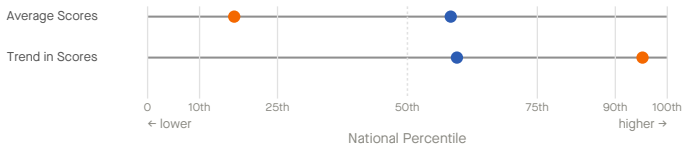
	Average	Trend
Low-income	25 / 44 (44th pct)	10 / 44 (79th pct)
Not low-income	24 / 44 (47th pct)	13 / 44 (73rd pct)

Math Ranks by Gender



	Average	Trend
Female	19 / 42 (56th pct)	20 / 42 (54th pct)
Male	18 / 43 (60th pct)	21 / 43 (52nd pct)

Reading Ranks by Gender

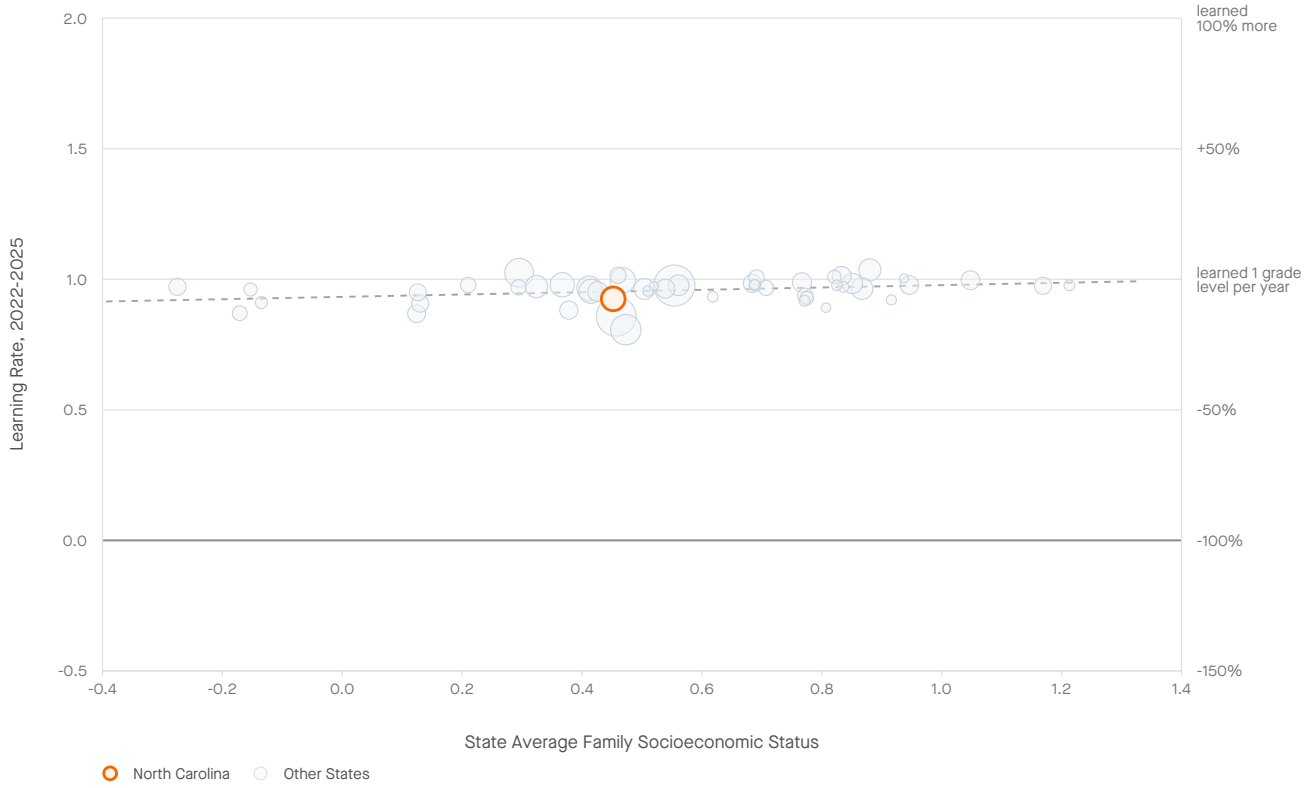


	Average	Trend
Female	36 / 43 (17th pct)	3 / 43 (95th pct)
Male	19 / 43 (58th pct)	18 / 43 (60th pct)

North Carolina

Average Grades 3-8 Learning Rates, 2022-2025, by State Socioeconomic Status

Learning rates measure how much students' scores improve as they progress from grade to grade. They are a better indicator of school quality than average test scores, which are influenced by a range of experiences outside of school.



Note: each bubble is a U.S. state, with size proportional to state enrollment. State socioeconomic status is a composite measure of average family income, parental education, poverty rate, SNAP eligibility rate, unemployment rate, and female-headed household rate.

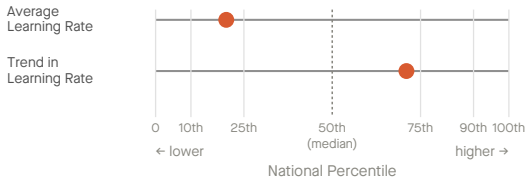
Learning Rates and Trends, 2022-2025

ALL STUDENTS

	2022-2025 Learning Rate	2022-2025 Trend in Learning Rates
North Carolina	0.93	0.00
National Average	0.96	-0.01

Learning rates are measured in grade levels of skills gained per year and are averaged over math and reading. The national average learning rate is 1.0. For example, the first row above reads: "Students in North Carolina learned an average of 0.93 grade levels/year during 2022-2025. Learning rates in North Carolina have been changing at a rate of -0.00 grade levels/year since 2022."

Learning Rate Rankings



	Average	Trend
North Carolina	41 / 51 (20th pct)	16 / 51 (71st pct)

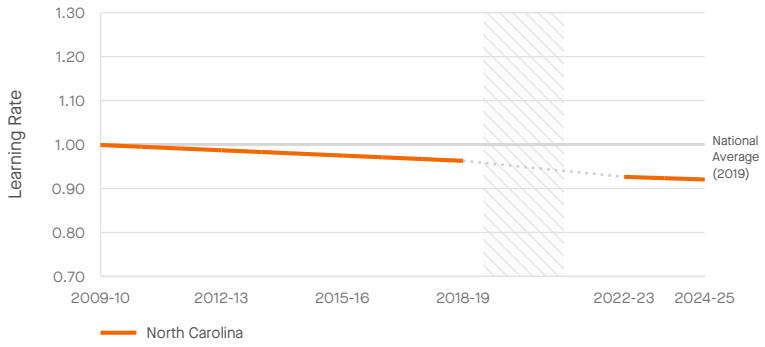
North Carolina ranked higher than 20% of states nationwide in average learning rates during the 2022-25 school years (41st of 51 states with available data).

North Carolina

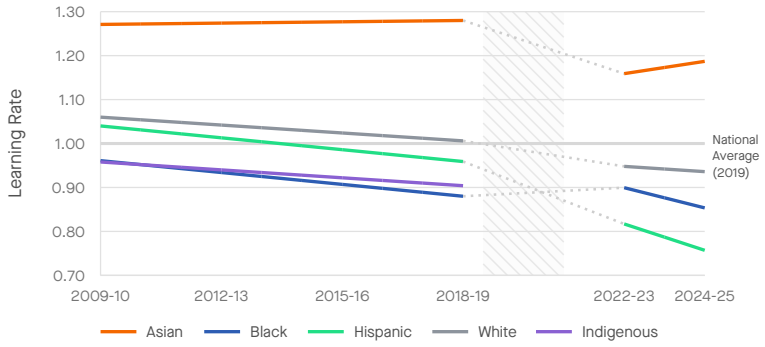
Trends in Average Grade 3-8 Learning Rates, 2009-2025, by Student Subgroup

Trends in learning rates measure how annual learning rates change over time. They are a better indicator of changes in school quality than trends in average test scores, which are influenced by a range of experiences outside of school.

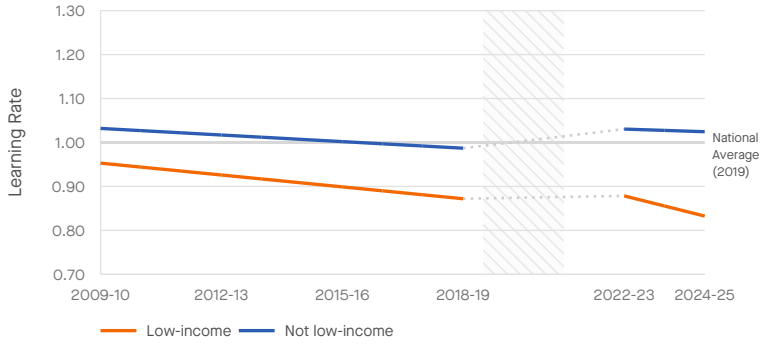
Trend in Learning Rates (All Students)



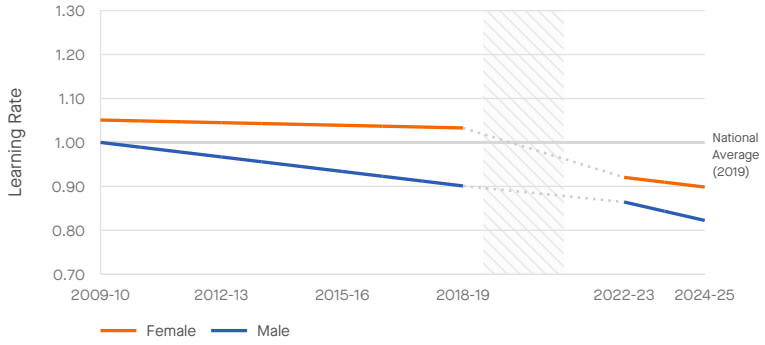
Trend in Learning Rates, by Student Race/Ethnicity



Trend in Learning Rates, by Student Income Level



Trend in Learning Rates, by Student Gender

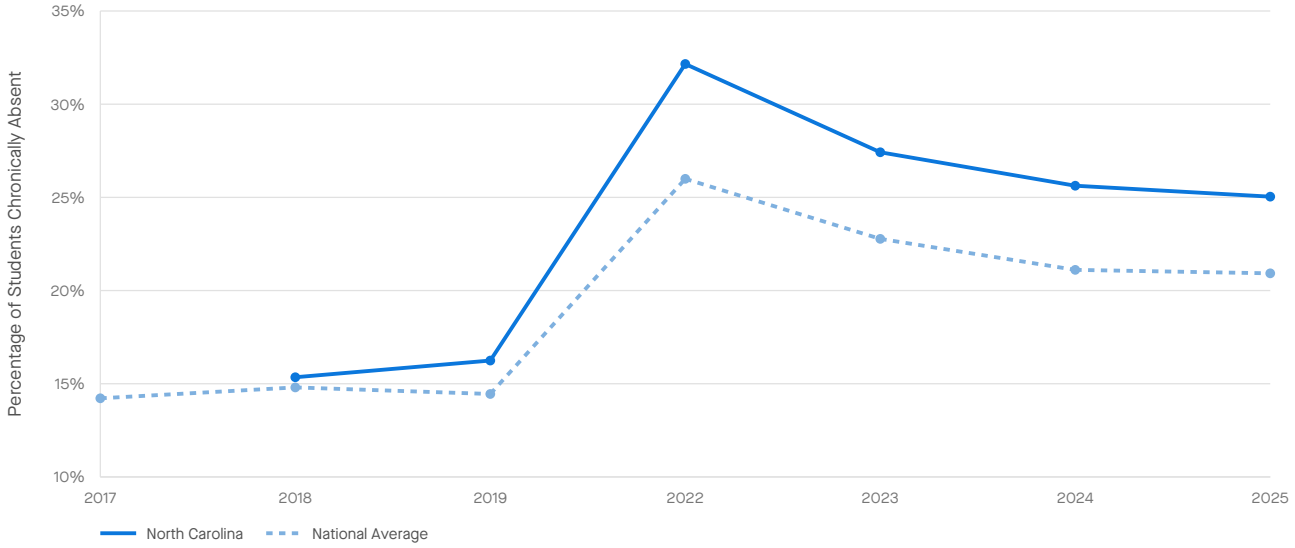


North Carolina

Trends in Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism rates indicate the proportion of students who were absent 10% or more of the school year.

Trends in Chronic Absenteeism



Trends in Chronic Absenteeism

ALL STUDENTS

	2017-2019 Avg. Chronic Absenteeism	2022-2025 Avg. Chronic Absenteeism	Change
North Carolina	15.8	27.6	-0.0
National Average	14.5	22.7	N/A

Absenteeism data courtesy of Nat Malkus, American Enterprise Institute.

North Carolina

Changes in Average Math Scores in North Carolina Districts, 2019-2025 and 2022-2025, by District Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility Rate

Change in Math Scores, 2019-2025

Figure produced by the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University

Largest Districts State Average

Change in Math Scores, 2022-2025

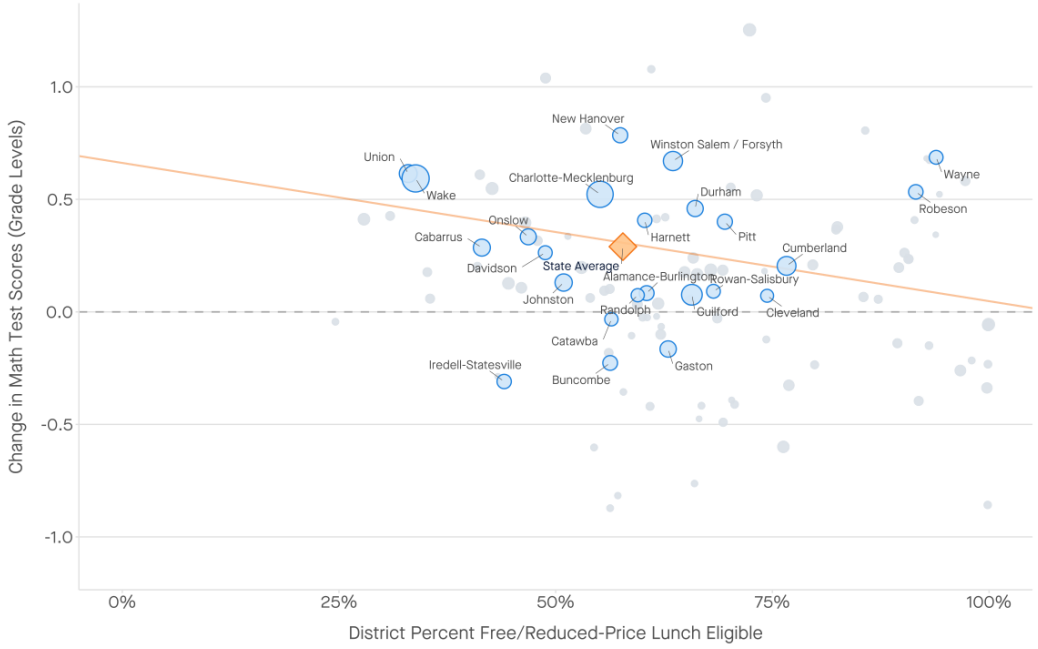


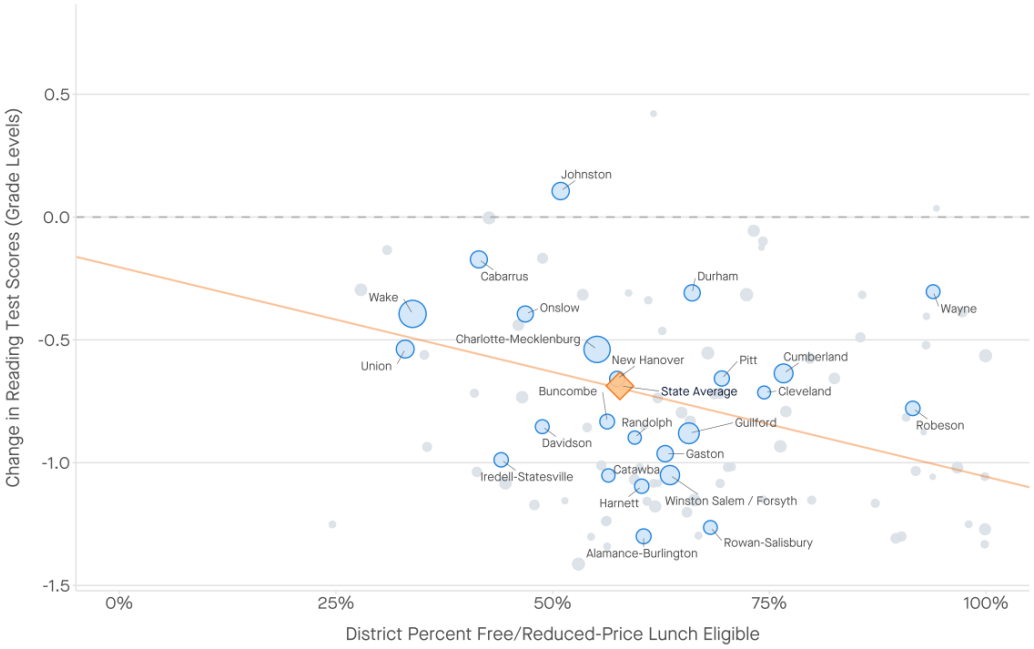
Figure produced by the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University

Largest Districts State Average

North Carolina

Changes in Average Reading Scores in North Carolina Districts, 2019-2025 and 2022-2025, by District Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility Rate

Change in Reading Scores, 2019-2025



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Largest Districts State Average

Change in Reading Scores, 2022-2025

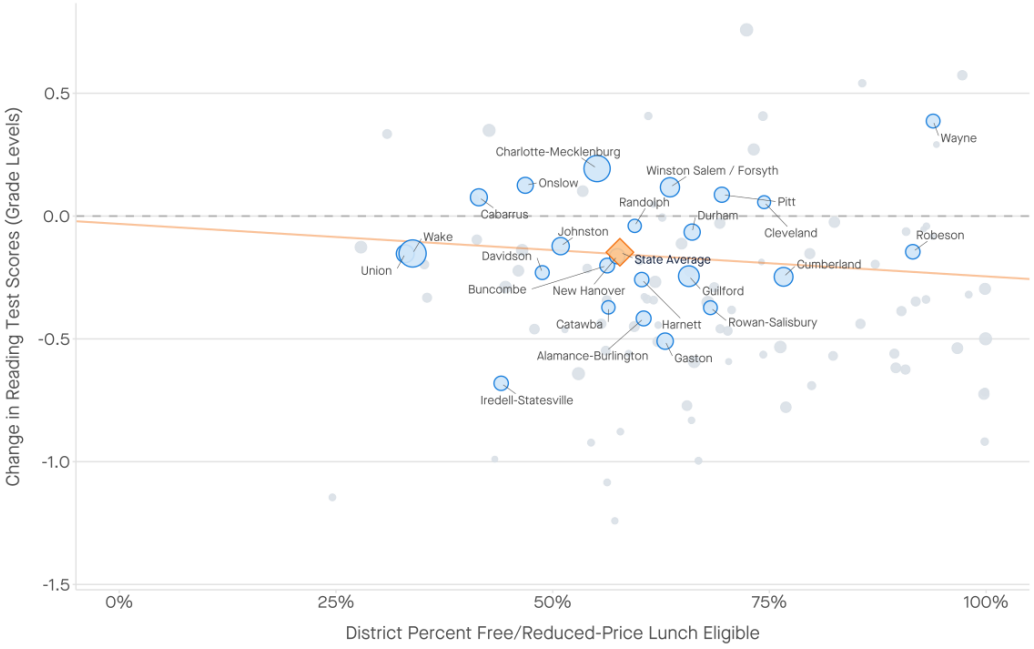

Figure produced by the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University

Largest Districts State Average

North Carolina

Change in Chronic Absenteeism in North Carolina Districts, 2019-2025, by District Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility Rate

Change in Chronic Absenteeism, 2019-2025

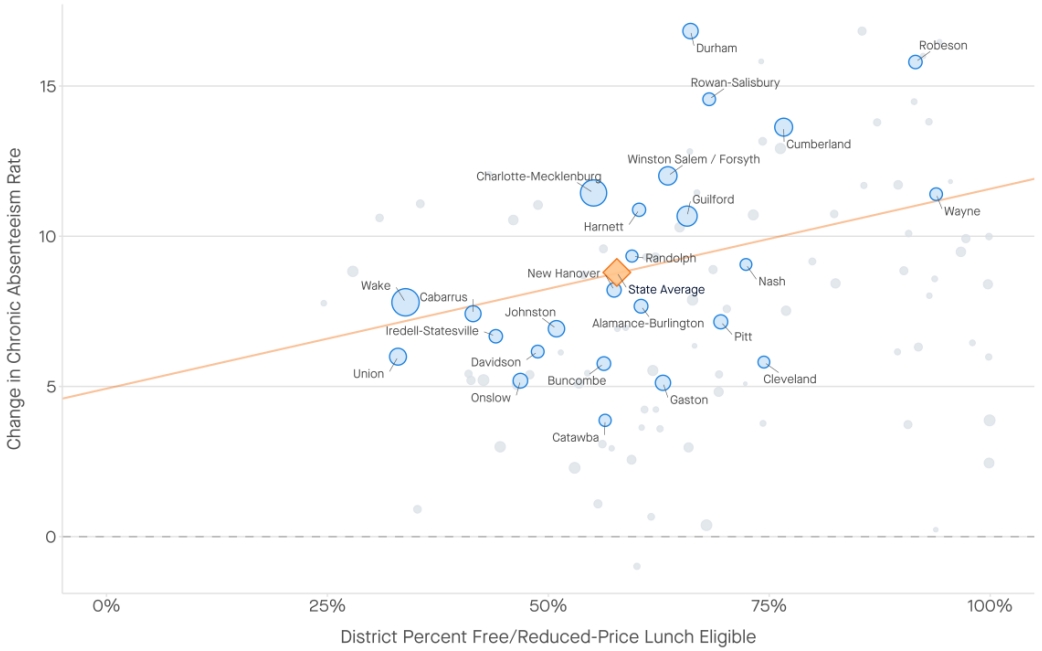

Figure produced by the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University

Largest Districts State Average

Notes & Acknowledgments

This report summarizes academic performance in North Carolina from 2008-09 through 2024-25, using data from the Stanford Education Data Archive (SEDA). SEDA is a national database of U.S. academic performance produced by the Educational Opportunity Project at Stanford University. The SEDA data are based on the standardized accountability tests in math and reading language arts (RLA) administered by each state to all public-school students in grades 3-8.

The raw test score data used to construct the SEDA 2022-2025 estimates here were graciously provided to us by Emily Oster and Clare Halloran at the Education Data Center. The raw test score data used to construct the SEDA 2009-2019 estimates are available through the ED*Facts* data system at the U.S. Department of Education, and were provided to us by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Detailed NAEP data used to harmonize test scores across states was provided by NCES and the National Assessment Governing Board. Chronic absenteeism data were provided by Nat Malkus at the American Enterprise Institute. Funding to construct and analyze SEDA was provided by the Gates Foundation. Funding for the Education Scorecard was provided by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Joyce Foundation, Kenneth C. Griffin and Citadel Catalyst. The findings and opinions expressed in our research and reported here are those of the authors alone; they do not represent the views of any of the above organizations.

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