

NC Senate Expands Private School Vouchers by Nearly Half Billion Dollars, Keeps Most Teacher Raises Below \$1,000

The new voucher expansion will primarily benefit wealthy families whose children already attend a private school.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- On Monday, the North Carolina Senate passed [House Bill 10](#), a budget adjustment that includes \$272.7 million new funds for

private school vouchers this year. Supporters say the additional funding is needed to make sure all families that applied for vouchers will receive them in 2024-25. But because school has already started and most families have made their schooling choices for the year, the dollars will benefit only those who are already sending their children to private school.

The bill also includes \$215 million extra for vouchers in 2025-26 and adds millions in future funding. By 2031 North Carolina will be spending \$900 million per year on private school tuition.

The lowest income families who applied for vouchers this year (i.e., those making up to \$57,740/year for a family of four) and most of those in the second income group (i.e., making up to \$115,440/year), have already been offered vouchers, so the new funding is not intended for them (1).

This year's waitlist families are from the wealthiest two groups, one earning up to \$260,000/year (receive a \$4,480 voucher per child) and the other with no income limit at all (receive \$3,360 per child) (1).

At the same time, North Carolina has the lowest teacher starting salary of southern states. Beginning teacher salaries increased \$2,000 from last year, but at nearly every other point on the salary scale, the state salary increase [was less than \\$1,000](#).

Teachers who are in their 15th through 24th year of teaching have a state salary of \$53,060 and



received a raise of only \$820. In other words, with the new voucher expansion, families of four who make up to \$260,000/year, nearly 5 times as much as a veteran teacher, are now going to get a voucher funded by state tax dollars worth 5.5 times the teacher's raise this year.

Educators and advocates expressed dismay at the vote during a press conference on Monday (2). Yevonne Brannon, Director of Public Schools First NC stated that “Public schools serve all children, and we have a constitutional and an ethical obligation to make sure that our children are getting the best public education they can. This bill prioritizes private schools over public schools, wealthy families over our teacher raises, and the nearly 1.4 million children who are attending our public schools. This is the wrong path for North Carolina, a state historically known for putting public schools first. We need to do that again.”

(1) Middle class and wealthy NC families are those waiting for private school voucher funding:<https://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/education/article288593597.html>

(2) Press conference, Monday 9/9/24:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NaCXoDow3PZpijXR68wpw4zgjt6Aba/view>

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