

NC Legislature Poised to Spend Almost as Much on Private School Vouchers as on Hurricane Disaster Relief

If lawmakers override Governor Cooper's veto of House Bill 10, NC will spend \$616 million on vouchers this year but have only earmarked \$877 for disaster relief

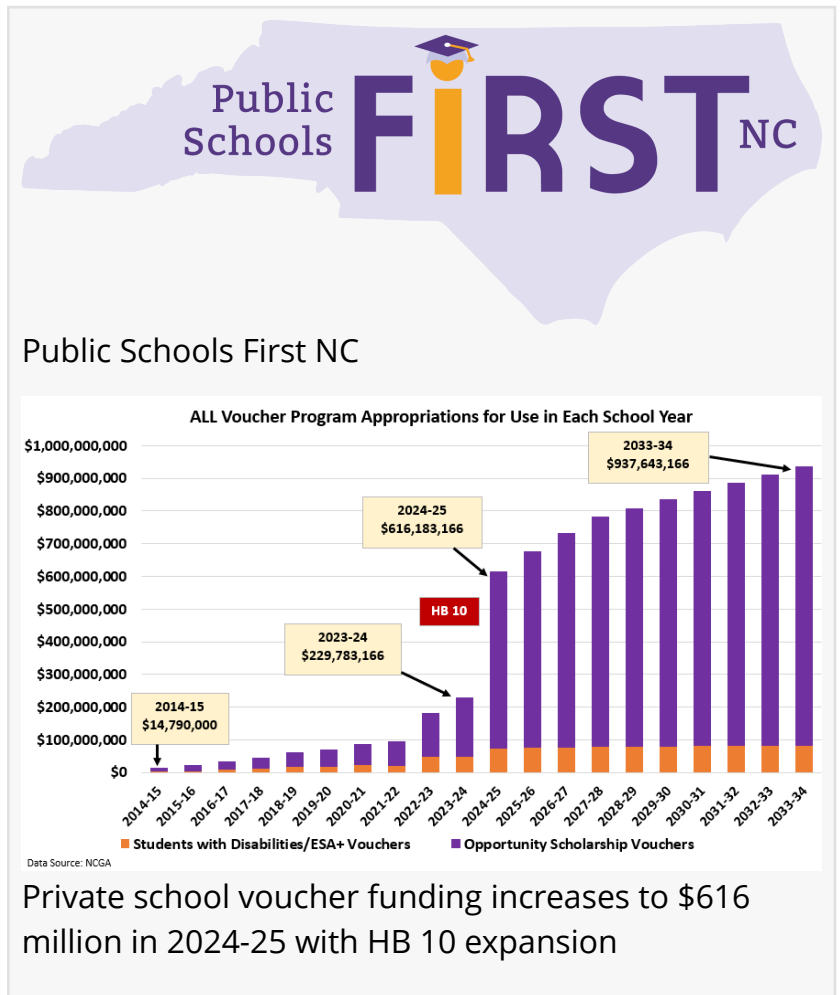
RALEIGH, NC, UNITED STATES,
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EINPresswire.com/ -- When they convene in Raleigh next week, North Carolina's state legislators face a decision. Will they override Governor Cooper's [veto of House Bill 10](#) and add millions to private school voucher funding, or will they keep the veto in place and prioritize disaster relief funding for communities affected by natural disasters that destroyed parts of the state in September?

House Bill 10, a mini-budget passed by the House and Senate in September and vetoed by Governor Cooper less than a week before Hurricane Helene devastated Western North Carolina, [ADDS \\$487 million to voucher programs](#) for spending this year and reserves for next year. It also increases future voucher spending. By 2033, North Carolina's voucher programs will get nearly \$1 billion every year.

But most of that spending benefits private schools in urban and suburban counties far from Western North Carolina. The \$4.5 million Buncombe County private schools got in tuition payments last year doesn't come close to the \$18.6 million that went to private schools in Cumberland County or the \$13.9 for vouchers in Wake County. (1)

Since Hurricane Helene, the North Carolina General Assembly has [appropriated just \\$877 million](#)



for disaster relief despite Governor Cooper's call for \$3.9 billion in spending.(2)

Because the vouchers were funded generously in last year's budget bill, a House Bill 10 veto override means that total voucher spending in 2024-25 will top \$616 million. That's just \$261 million less than total state disaster relief. Hurricane Helene damage estimates top \$53 billion.

(3)

Will legislators representing Western North Carolina vote to spend more on private school vouchers that benefit private schools far from their constituents, or will they focus state dollars on building back their communities? Both Senate and House leadership have affirmed their commitment to expanding voucher funding when lawmakers convene. (4)

Last week's election results ended the supermajority that enabled North Carolina's lawmakers to override the governor's vetoes. They have until January to push forward with priorities such as voucher expansion before being faced with the need to compromise with members across the aisle.

In contrast to voucher legislation, the two disaster relief bills passed with unanimous bipartisan support.

1. Opportunity Scholarship Voucher Payments by County 2014-2024:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1EKa8r6hccu7iTdaO8uqKbvN4DWVP8elf/edit?gid=657196238#gid=657196238>

2. Cooper recommends \$3.9B in state funding for Helene, says storm costliest ever for NC:

<https://abc11.com/post/cooper-recommends-39b-state-funding-helene-says-storm-costliest-nc/15460351/>

3. Hurricane Helene's damage, related expenses in North Carolina shatter records, estimated at

\$53 billion: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/hurricane-helenes-north-carolina-damage-53-billion-record/>

4. NC Republicans looking to push agenda before supermajority ends:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16ov07d6ULA>

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