

North Carolina's Taxpayer-Funded Private School Vouchers May Face Accountability Measures

North Carolina is spending millions each year on tax-payer funded private school vouchers, but currently requires no accountability for how the funds are spent.



RALEIGH, NC, UNITED STATES, April 24, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Budget discussions are heating up in North Carolina as the Senate just released its

proposal and the House's proposal is coming soon. In recent years, voucher policy has been embedded in budget bills, often taking language from stand-alone bills introduced earlier. This year, a handful of stand-alone bills show a clear push to bring needed transparency and accountability to the state's voucher program. In particular, two voucher accountability bills—one introduced in each chamber—take steps to bring private schools that take school vouchers funded by public tax dollars closer to the level of accountability and transparency provided by public schools.

Approximately 75% of North Carolina's nearly 900 private schools are registered as direct-payment schools that are eligible to receive tuition voucher payments from the state. In 2024-25, the program became universal, meaning that any family, regardless of their income, level can receive a state-funded tuition subsidy. In addition, the requirement that the students receiving the vouchers have prior public school enrollment was dropped to allow all private school students to qualify.

As a result, applications and expenses soared. As of April 2025, taxpayer-funded tuition payments for the 2024-25 school year are more than three times what they were last year, with expenses to date topping [\\$431 million](#) this year alone.

The current state base budget for 2025-26 includes an appropriation of [\\$731 million](#) for the voucher programs, though lawmakers still have time to make changes.

[Senate Bill 774](#) and House Bill 815 (1) change the language of current law to build in fiscal, safety,

and academic standards for the private schools that accept taxpayer-funded tuition vouchers.

If the changes are made, private schools will be required to:

- hire licensed teachers for at least 50% of the teaching staff. Currently, private schools do not have to hire any licensed teachers or even college graduates.
- follow the local school district's policy of conducting criminal background checks on all staff. Currently only one staff member at a private school must pass a criminal background check.
- administer the same tests required by state law for students in grades three and higher.
- comply with the state standard course of study.
- conduct a financial audit. Schools receiving more than \$250,000 in voucher funds must publish their expenditures in the state reporting system (Uniform Education Reporting System).
- maintain a student population that reasonably reflects the racial and ethnic composition of the general population residing within the local school district.

Private schools would also be prohibited from increasing tuition more than 5% in one year and they will receive tuition payments from the state on a monthly basis (changed from twice/year) to allow for students entering or leaving the schools.

When taxpayers are spending hundreds of millions annually in private school tuition payments, it makes good sense for private schools, just like public schools, to account for how those dollars are spent.

1. House Bill 815: <https://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookup/2025/hb%20815>

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