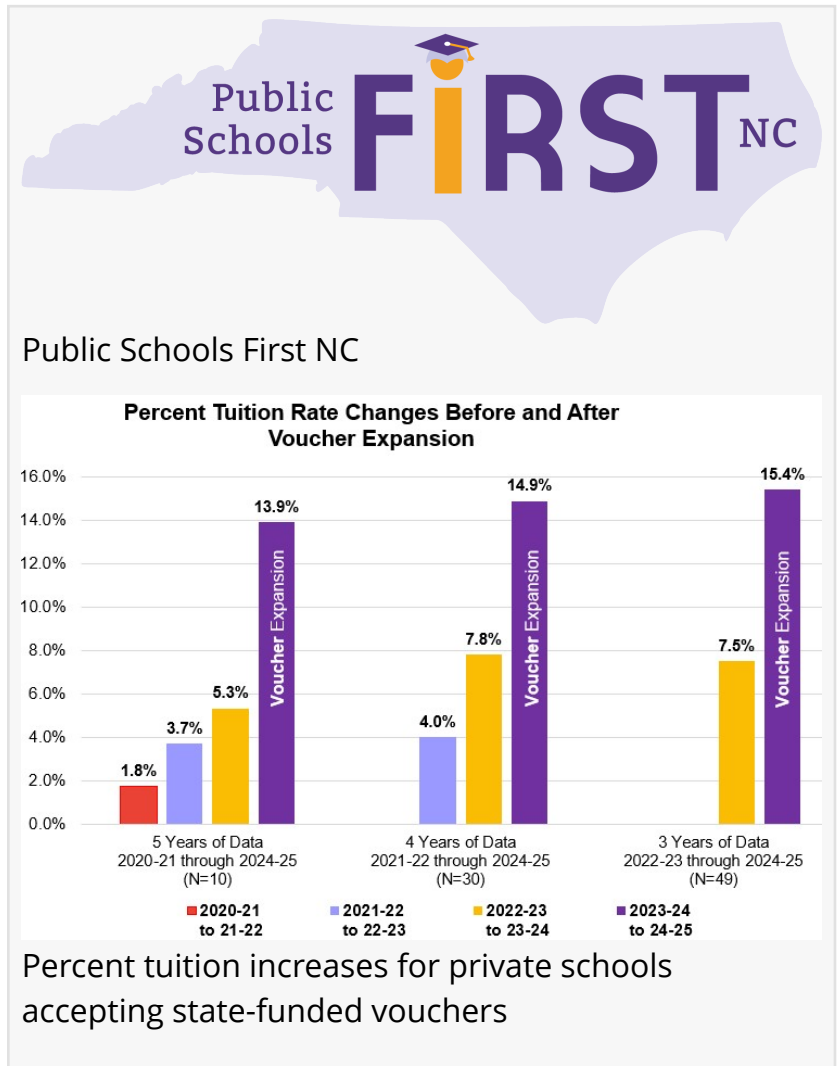


In North Carolina Tax-Funded Vouchers Boost Private School Tuition

RALEIGH, NC, UNITED STATES, June 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The 2024-25 school year was the first year that North Carolina's Opportunity Scholarship taxpayer-funded private school voucher program became universally available. For the first time, all families could apply to receive a tuition subsidy regardless of income or whether their child had ever attended a public school. This policy change marked a striking shift in taxpayer burden from using public dollars to fund only public schools open to all students to adding the expense of funding private schools through tuition vouchers.

Studies tracking voucher expansions in other states such as [Iowa](#) and Arizona (1) revealed that private schools raised their tuition and pressured families to apply for vouchers once they became universally available. Public Schools First NC's examination of tuition data in North Carolina found similar patterns. We found sharp tuition rate increases in the first year of universal voucher availability, with many schools raising rates to match the voucher amounts. We also found evidence of schools taking advantage of the voucher program by giving admissions preference to families who applied for vouchers or requiring families to apply for a voucher as part of the school's [admissions process](#).

To examine whether the introduction of universal vouchers accelerated tuition increases, tuition rates for schools dating back to at least 2022-23 were examined. Three data groups were obtained with data back to 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23 in addition to tuition for 2023-24 and



2024-25.

In all three groups, the average percentage change in tuition increased substantially in the year the voucher expansion went into effect. In two cohorts, it more than doubled. The data strongly suggest that voucher availability drove the increase in tuition rates.

In addition to raising tuition, many private schools also strongly encouraged and, in some cases, even required applicants to apply for vouchers. For example, Grace Christian School in Lee County lists as #4 in their admissions process “Apply for the NCSEAA Opportunity Scholarship” followed by the statement: “Complete the NC Opportunity scholarship Application during the scholarship application period for each student who will attend GCS. All students must apply for this scholarship prior to applying for enrollment at GCS.”

Before the 2024-25 school year, applying for a voucher was not a step in their admissions process. In 2024-25, Grace Christian School received more than [\\$5.1 million](#) in Opportunity Scholarship tuition payments from the state.

Other schools say clearly that they give preference in their admissions processes to students who have received state-funded vouchers. For example, ALC Mosaic in Mecklenburg County stated on its website that “We will be prioritizing families who have applied for and received the opportunity scholarship for 2024-25.” (2)

When new applications for Opportunity Scholarships rose to more than 72,000 last year in response to expanded eligibility (e.g., no income limits, no requirement for prior public school enrollment), voucher supporters claimed that family interest and need drove the increase. (3) The data suggest that private school admission policies encouraging or requiring families to apply for vouchers also contributed to the rise in applications.

As North Carolina lawmakers enter the budget negotiation process, they are poised to spend \$731 on voucher programs (4) in 2025-26 despite public schools across the state facing budget cuts and staffing shortages.

The patterns in tuition increases we revealed show that private schools are raising tuition to take advantage of the voucher funding. At the same time, many schools are incentivizing families to apply for vouchers. As a result, families may be forced to apply for a voucher even if they have no financial need or would choose not to apply if left to their own devices.

1. Private Schools Are Cashing in on Arizona’s Voucher Scheme:

<https://www.azcentral.com/story/opinion/op-ed/ej-montini/2023/11/28/private-schools-raise-tuition-thanks-arizona-voucher-scam/71725406007/>

2. Tuition Info, ALC Mosaic: <https://www.alcmosaic.org/tuition-info>

3. Record-Breaking 72,000 Apply for Opportunity Scholarships: <https://nc211.org/the-carolina-journal/>

4. Fiscal Research Division: <https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/94767>

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