NC Achieves Historic Graduation Rate, Higher Test Scores

Data released on 2025-26 public school performance shows the highest graduation rate in NC history along with steadily improving state test scores.



Public Schools First NC

RALEIGH, NC, UNITED STATES, September 10, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- The North Carolina Department of Instruction released accountability results from the 2025-26 school year at the State Board of Education's September meeting, giving the state many reasons to celebrate. North Carolina showed improvement across nearly all metrics and had an almost perfect testing participation rate of 99%.

The high school four-year cohort graduation rate rose for the fourth consecutive year, reaching 88.8% (up from 87.8% last year). This is the second year in a row the state has achieved a new record high graduation rate.

The percentage of students achieving grade-level proficiency reached the highest point in the last three years in 14 of the 15 tested subjects. Grade 4 reading was the only test where scores did not improve; scores fell from 58% to 57% grade level proficient.

Results for all race and ethnic groups were their highest in the last three years.

The percentage of students achieving grade-level proficiency on the composite of all grades and subjects increased by 4.2% from last year to 59.2%.

School Performance Grades also showed an upward trend. More schools earned an A, B, or C and fewer earned a D or F. As a result, the number of low-performing schools and districts was significantly reduced.

These results are a true testament to the high-quality and resilience of North Carolina's public school students, educators, staff, and families. Despite the state being ranked 50th lowest in public education support and funding level, North Carolina's students and schools continue to

beat the odds.

These positive achievement results bring North Carolina's public schools several steps closer to the goal of becoming the best in the nation by 2030. Superintendent Mo Green revealed a strategic plan to achieve best-in-the-nation status in August 2025. The plan includes specific benchmarks and actions necessary to achieve them. To help people follow progress on every goal, NCDPI created the Achieving Educational Excellence strategic plan dashboard. The dashboard is a remarkable example of public school accountability and transparency.

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