2024-25 Enrollment Forecast: 5 Year

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

North Carolina Department of PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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CAROLINA DEMOGRAPHY

Demographic Analytics Advisors

2024-25 | 5-Year Enrollment Forecast

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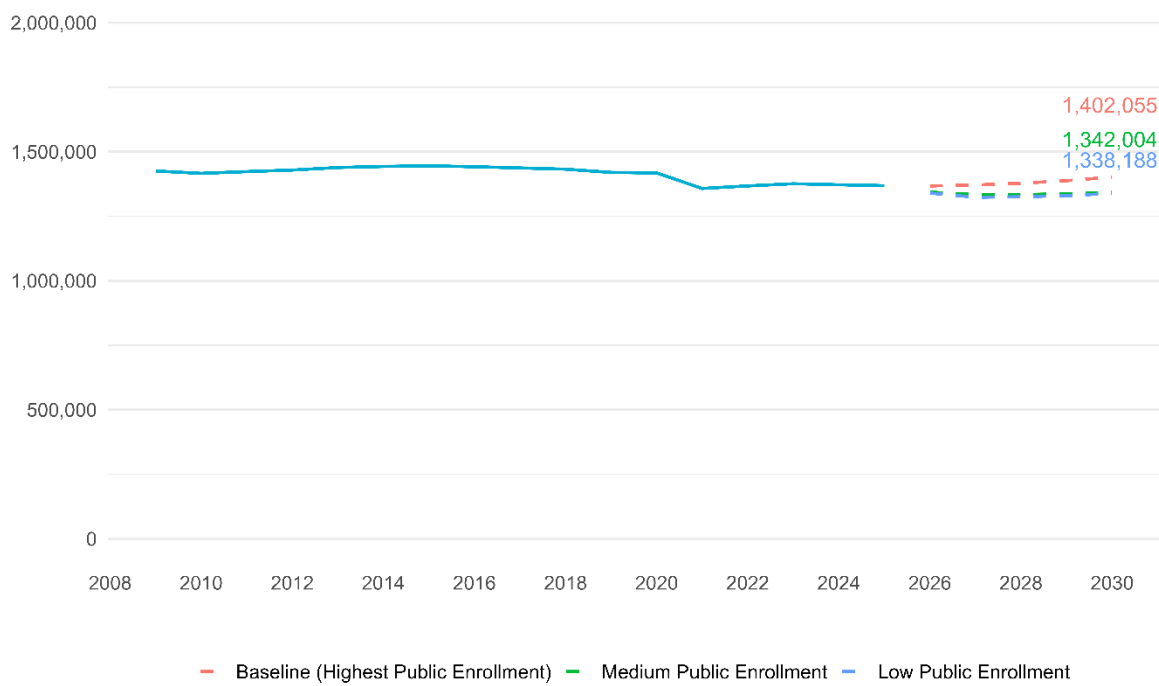
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Introduction

This report provides details and an overview of the development and results of a 5-year enrollment forecast for each of the public school LEAs, charter schools, private schools (by county), and home schools (by county) for the state of North Carolina. The forecast period runs from the 2025-26 school year through the 2029-30 school year (for private and home schools we also forecast 2024-25). Forecasting student enrollment is always a complicated process due to the many factors that influence student population changes, but it has become even more complex in recent years for a host of reasons. First, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the historical time series of enrollment trends, making it more difficult to understand how future trends may occur. Second, while fertility rates have been declining throughout North Carolina – and throughout the rest of the United States as well – some areas of the state have continued to grow markedly because of in-migration. Finally, changes in the market share of traditional public schooling (versus charter schools, private schools, and home schools) have been rapid. Some of these changes are due to the pandemic, while some are due to changes in legislation.[1]

Below, we begin by looking at the methodology we used to develop these forecasts and then move on to cover the results of the forecasts. Before we move to the methodology, we provide high level results at the state level for public, private, charter and home schools. We show results for three separate series. The Baseline (Highest Public Enrollment) series assumes similar private and charter school growth to historical trends, the Medium Public Enrollment series assumes private schools grow in line with the expansion of the opportunity scholarship program from 2024, while the Low Public Enrollment series assumes additional growth based on the number of applications for the program for the 2025-26 school year.
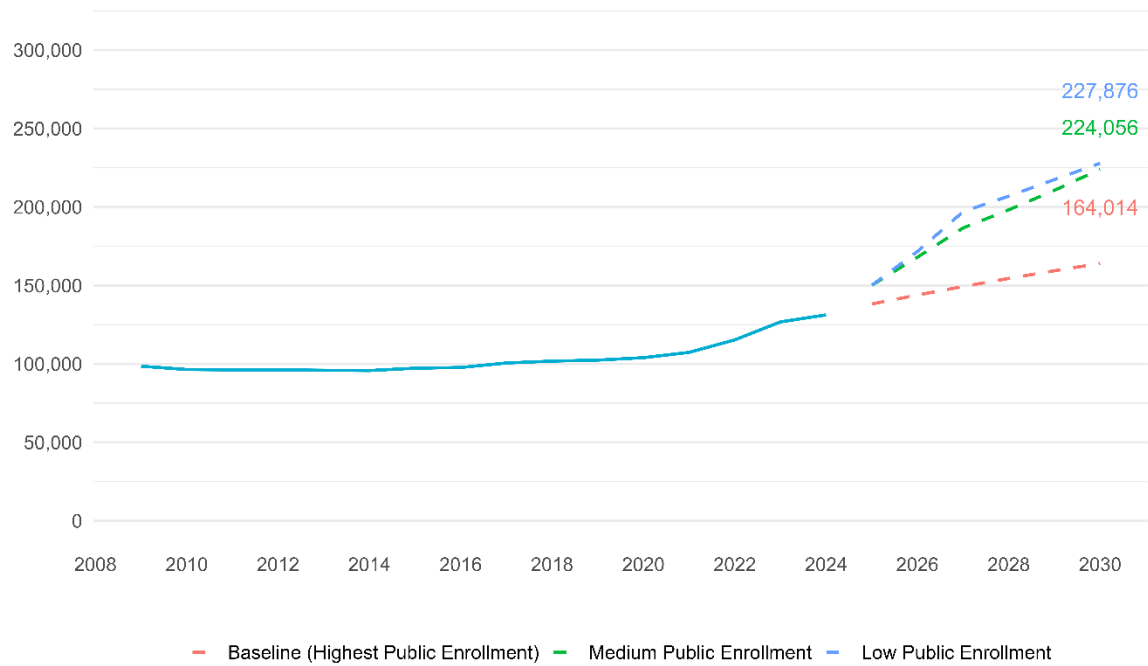
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[1] https://www.ncseaa.edu/2023/10/the-2023-appropriations-act-expands-eligibility-for-the-opportunity-scholarship-program/

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Figure 1. North Carolina Public Schools Forecasts: Series Comparisons
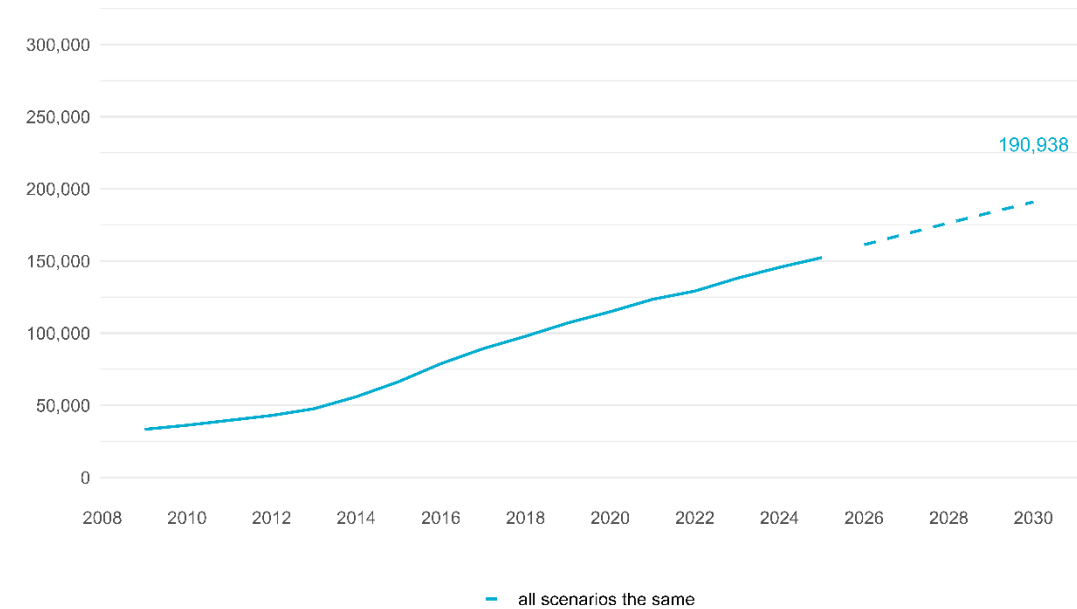

As Figure 1 shows, for public schools, we are forecasting a slight increase over the next 5 years in the baseline series to 1.4 million enrolled students. In the medium and low public school series, we are forecasting slight declines in public school enrollment of 26,000 to 30,000 lower. Figure 2 shows the results for private schools.

Figure 2. North Carolina Private Schools Forecasts: Series Comparisons

In the baseline series we can see that our forecast suggests continued growth in private schools over the next 5 years, a continuation of their growth since the beginning of the pandemic. In the medium and low series, we see significantly higher private enrollment with the expansion of the opportunity scholarship program. As we discuss below, this medium series is based on the North Carolina Office of State Budget & Management (NCOSBM) analysis of the expansion of the program, adjusted for the number of scholarships in the 2024-25 school year, and is the most likely of the three scenarios. Figure 3 shows the forecasts for charter schools at the state level.

Figure 3. North Carolina Charter Schools Forecasts: Series Comparisons

In Figure 3 we can see that we are forecasting continued growth in charters. Given that our focus in scenarios was on the expansion of private school enrollment, charter school enrollment remains unaffected. Moving forward, however, we will continue to monitor whether this expansion has differential impacts on charters, or if charter school students tend to be a different population than those who are likely to be opportunity scholarship applicants. Finally, we look at trends in homeschooling in Figure 4.

Figure 4. North Carolina Home Schools Forecasts: Series Comparisons

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As Figure 4 shows, like we did for charter schools, we did not create separate scenarios for home schooling. Figure 4 shows that we are forecasting the home-schooled population to increase steadily over the next 5 years, returning to similar levels seen pre-pandemic. Next, we turn to the methodology by which we arrived at these findings.

Methodology

We begin with a discussion of the methodology used to develop the set of 5-year forecasts for all school districts and charter schools throughout the state. We developed three models of enrollment to address the uncertainty around trends in private and charter school growth. We cover the methodology for each type of school – public, charter, private, and home – in order.

Public School Methodology

We develop public school enrollment forecasts using a modified grade progression ratio methodology. We use the weighted average of grade progression ratios from the last three school years at the LEA level. Our weighting factors for the last three years are 50% for the most recent year and 25% for the prior two years. To calculate the incoming Kindergarten classes, we use the ratio of births five years prior to the current school year kindergarten class. We then apply this ratio to calculate future years kindergarten classes for each LEA based on county level births (actual or forecasted). We base this ratio on a weighted average of the kindergarten to birth ratio from 2019-20, 2018-19, and 2017-18. We disregard the COVID-19 years because for many LEAs the 2024-25 school year ratio looked much closer to data from prior to COVID-19. This is an assumption that we will continue to watch in the future.

We then apply these grade progression ratios to the current classes to forecast out future classes of students. Once we have these initial forecasts, we subtract out the additional impacts of new charter schools, additional charter growth, and additional private school growth. How these are treated depends upon the forecast series:

1. Baseline: We subtract out the growth based on known new openings of charter schools, or the continued growth of newly opened charter schools until they fill out their capacity for total enrollment over 5 years. Additional growth of private and charter schools is assumed to be included already in this forecast, as the assumption of the baseline forecast is that we will follow historical trends in private and charter school growth.
2. Medium Series: In addition to the new charter growth subtracted out in the baseline, we also subtract out all private and charter growth from the medium series (explained below) above and beyond the baseline growth for these types of schooling.
3. Low Series: In addition to the new charter growth subtracted out in the baseline, we also subtract out all private and charter growth from the low series (explained below) above and beyond the baseline growth for these types of schooling.

Charter School Methodology

Since the NCDPI Financial and Business Services Division provided forecasted growth reported directly from the charter schools for the next year we were able to take this information into account in our forecasts and then

extrapolate this out into the future for 4 more years. However, we did not just assume this forecast was correct, we did several things to update the forecast. Specifically, for each model in turn:

1. Baseline series:
   a. We started with a time series forecast model of total enrollment by charter school based on historical patterns. We tested several models, but the best fit was a damped Holt's method (with phi = 0.95).
   b. However, these methods would not work for charters that had been opened less than five years. For those we went to the totals that were on their application for the 2025-26 school year.
   c. Next, if our forecast was higher than the one provided by the charter school, we overwrote the forecast with the forecast they provided.
   d. Next, if the forecast was negative, we changed the forecast to the prior school year total.
   e. Finally, if the forecast created an increase of over 15%, we decreased the overall forecast to a 15% increase.
   f. We then used the 2025 grade distribution to create a by grade distribution for 2025-26 through 2029-30.
2. Medium series:
   a. Same as above
3. Low series:
   a. Same as above

Private School Methodology

Given that private schools have been growing in much of North Carolina during and after the pandemic, we wanted to make sure to not only forecast the impact of this continued increase but also forecast without overestimating or underestimating the impact of changes to the Opportunity Scholarship program on public school enrollment. To be clear, this is the most unknown part of this forecasting process, more observed data is necessary to help to better understand how this may change over time. We go through our methodological process for each series in turn:

1. Baseline series:
   a. We started with a time series forecast model of statewide total enrollment for private schools. Data were only available through the 2023-24 school year, so instead of a 5-year forecast we made a 6-year forecast.
   b. Once we had a forecast of total enrollment for the state, we created enrollment forecasts for each county using a forecast of the shifting share of total state level private school enrollment.
   c. Finally, we created county-level by grade forecasts by using the state-level allocation of grades for private schools from the 2021-22 school year for all forecast years, which was the last year private school enrollment was reported by grade.
2. Medium series:
   a. To begin understanding the implications of the expansion of the Opportunity Scholarship program we also looked at how it might increase. For the medium series we used data from the NCOSBM[2], with some additional extrapolation for 2027-28 through 2029-30 school years. We then adjusted this growth

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[2] https://governor.nc.gov/documents/files/osbm-s406-h823-impact-analysis/open.

based on the number of scholarships during 2024-25 from the Opportunity Scholarship program[3] as of February 3, 2025. The total scholarships in 2024-25 grew quicker than the original extrapolation suggested, and as a result total scholarships are higher in the early years of our forecast.

   b. We then estimated the percentage of those scholarship students who came from public schools in the 2023-24 school year, based on the increase in private school enrollment relative to number of scholarships awarded and changing birth cohort sizes throughout the forecast (15-33%).
   c. We then calculated the difference between the baseline and the medium series to have a number of students to subtract from the public-school enrollment figures for the medium series.
   d. We then applied the county level applications for the Opportunity Scholarship program proportions for the state to these new students, so we have a number of students by county.
   e. Finally, we apply the 2021-22 grade distribution at the state level to these new students.

3. Low series:
   a. We undertake all of the same steps as the medium series in the low series. However, instead of using the NCOSBM forecast of Opportunity Scholarship recipients, beginning in 2026-27 we use an increased number that is in line with the additional applications seen for the 2024-25 school year (that were not fully funded).
   b. We do, however, make an assumption that a slightly lower proportion of these students will come from public schools than in the medium series. This is because if there are more students funded it is likely those with higher incomes and those already in private schools may be more likely to be funded. So, instead of 15-33% of the students coming from public schools, we estimate the percentage will be between 15-27.5%.

Home Schools

We only forecast one series for home schools, and apply it to each of the different series. Prior to 2023-24, home schooling was declining from its pandemic highs, but the latest year suggests a change in that trend. Home schooling returned to growth consistent with that seen before 2020-21. We do not believe that changes in the private or charter school uptake will make a large difference in how home-schooling increases or decreases in the future (though it may impact where formerly home-schooled children end up attending school if they change mode of schooling). To forecast home school enrollment, we use a very similar process to how we forecasted private school enrollment for the baseline series:

1. First, we use a time-series forecasting methodology at the state level to forecast our topline enrollment.
2. Next, we forecast the shifting share of this total that should be placed in each county.
3. Finally, we use the 2023-24 school year grade distribution to place these students in grades for each county.

Results

As we discussed in the introduction, the overall trend for the state is relative stability or slight decline for public school enrollment, resumption to growth for home schooling, and moderate increases for both charter and private schooling. But how does this play out through the state? Below we see the 10 fastest growing LEAs by numeric change. A

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[3] https://www.ncseaa.edu/opportunity-scholarship-summary-of-data/

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complete set of spreadsheets with all forecast data for each year by public school LEA, charter school, private schools by county, and home school students by county, is available as an attachment to this report.

Table 1. Top 10 Fastest-Growing Public Schools in North Carolina by Student Enrollment Increase
Projected Growth 2024-25 to 2029-30

LEA	County	LEA Name	2024-25 Enrollment	2029-30 Enrollment	Projected Growth	Projected Growth Total Percent	Projected Annualized Growth Rate
600	Mecklenburg	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	141,726	151,255	9,529	6.72%	1.31%
920	Wake	Wake County Schools	161,115	168,068	6,953	4.32%	0.85%
510	Johnston	Johnston County Public Schools	37,030	40,757	3,727	10.06%	1.94%
130	Cabarrus	Cabarrus County Schools	35,142	38,644	3,502	9.97%	1.92%
360	Gaston	Gaston County Schools	30,573	33,670	3,097	10.13%	1.95%
010	Alamance	Alamance-Burlington Schools	22,338	24,049	1,711	7.66%	1.49%
550	Lincoln	Lincoln County Schools	11,426	12,795	1,369	11.98%	2.29%
490	Iredell	Iredell-Statesville Schools	20,696	22,016	1,320	6.38%	1.24%
290	Davidson	Davidson County Schools	17,688	18,987	1,299	7.34%	1.43%
900	Union	Union County Public Schools	40,870	42,145	1,275	3.12%	0.62%

If we look by percentage increase, we go from looking at some of the biggest districts to some smaller but fast-growing districts.

Table 2. Top 10 Fastest-Growing Public Schools in North Carolina by Percentage Increase in Student Enrollment
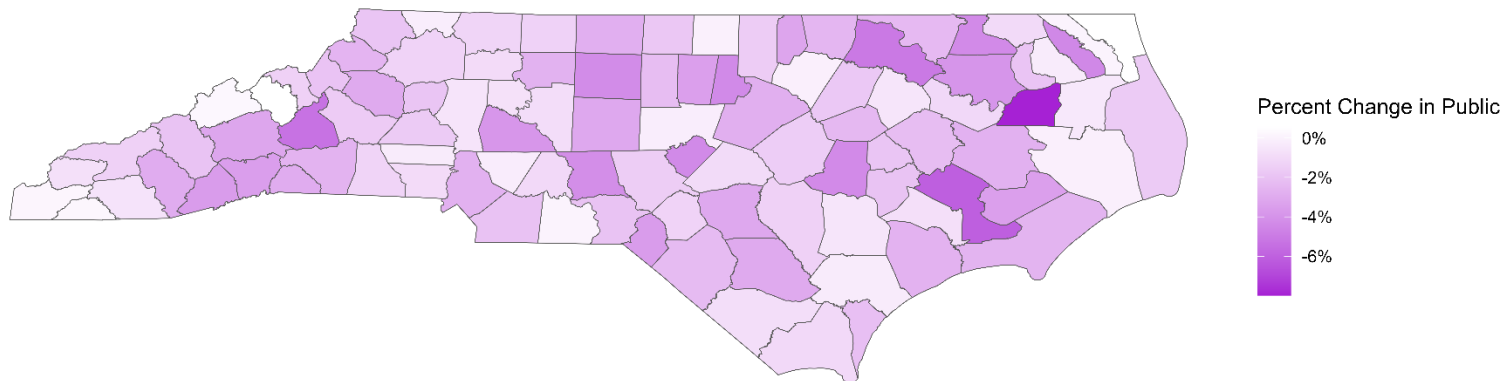*Projected Growth 2024-25 to 2029-30*

LEA	County	LEA Name	2024-25 Enrollment	2029-30 Enrollment	Projected Growth Total Percent	Projected Annualized Growth Rate	Projected Growth
270	Currituck	Currituck County Schools	4,518	5,173	14.50%	2.74%	655
550	Lincoln	Lincoln County Schools	11,426	12,795	11.98%	2.29%	1,369
995	Yancey	Yancey County Schools	2,042	2,283	11.80%	2.26%	241
350	Franklin	Franklin County Schools	7,855	8,750	11.39%	2.18%	895
570	Madison	Madison County Schools	2,060	2,281	10.73%	2.06%	221
360	Gaston	Gaston County Schools	30,573	33,670	10.13%	1.95%	3,097
510	Johnston	Johnston County Public Schools	37,030	40,757	10.06%	1.94%	3,727
130	Cabarrus	Cabarrus County Schools	35,142	38,644	9.97%	1.92%	3,502
220	Clay	Clay County Schools	1,254	1,377	9.81%	1.89%	123
491	Iredell	Mooresville Graded School District	5,794	6,353	9.65%	1.86%	559

We do see Johnston, Cabarrus, Gaston, Lincoln, Iredell, and Davidson on both lists.

The tables above highlight some of the fastest growing counties for public schools, but one thing we want to focus on is public school enrollment compared to the other school types. The following three maps show the proportion of students in public school enrollment compared to the entire county's enrollment. It is important to note that these maps depict change in public enrollment share for the county, and not change in public school enrollment. Even if the percent change in public is negative for a county, it is still possible the actual number of students in public schools increases over the period. It works conversely in the opposite direction, as public share can increase even when the number of students in public school decreases.
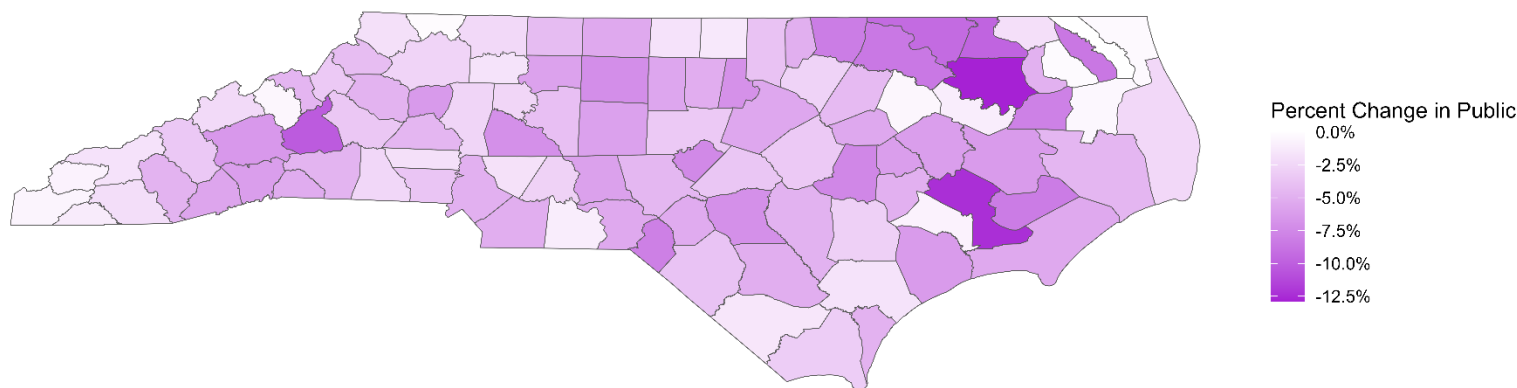
In the first chart for the baseline, we can see a general decline in relative public school enrollments, with public share in couple counties even decreasing by over 6%. Some counties do have slightly increasing proportions going into public school as well, but not by much.

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Figure 5. Projected Percent Change of Students Enrolled in Public Schools: School Year 2024-25 to 2029-30
Forecast Series: Baseline (Highest Public Enrollment)

Moving to the medium series we see that nearly all of the counties are decreasing in the percentage of their students that are in public schools, with some percentage point declines in public school enrollment over 12%.
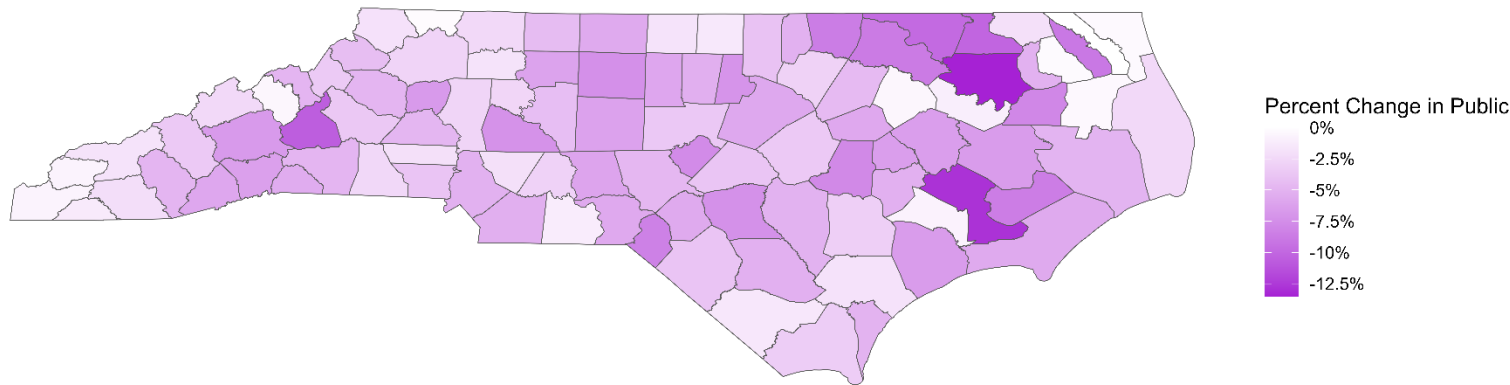
Figure 6. Projected Percent Change of Students Enrolled in Public Schools: School Year 2024-25 to 2029-30
Forecast Series: Medium Public Enrollment

The low public school enrollment series is similar to the medium forecast, with declines again over 12%.

Figure 7. Projected Percent Change of Students Enrolled in Public Schools: School Year 2024-25 to 2029-30

Forecast Series: Low Public Enrollment

One of the biggest factors we attribute to the decrease in public enrollment share with this forecast is the change in private school enrollment. Below we see four maps, one for the percentage of a county that is enrolled in private school in 2024-25, the next three are for each series of the forecast for 2029-30.

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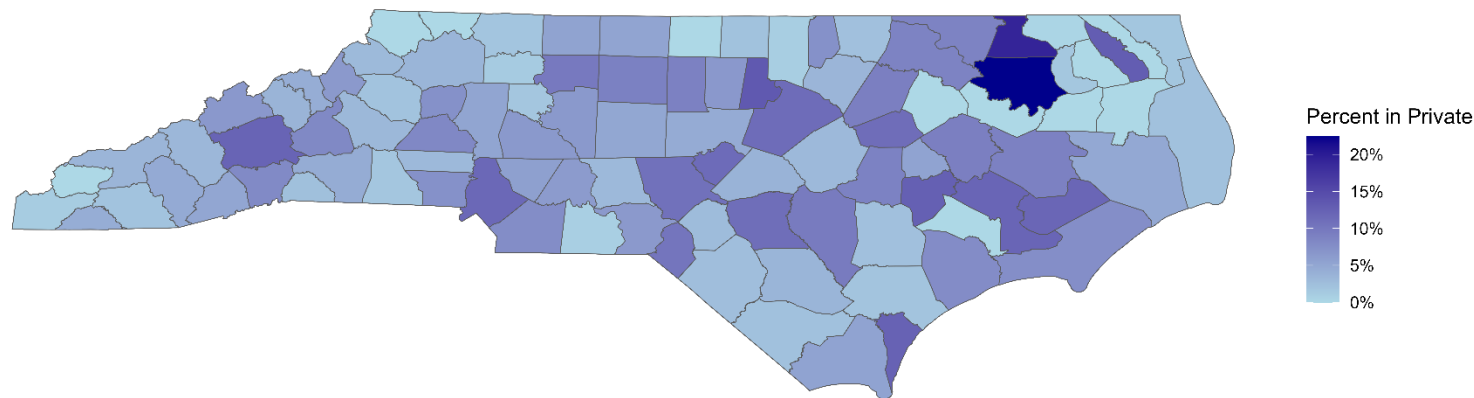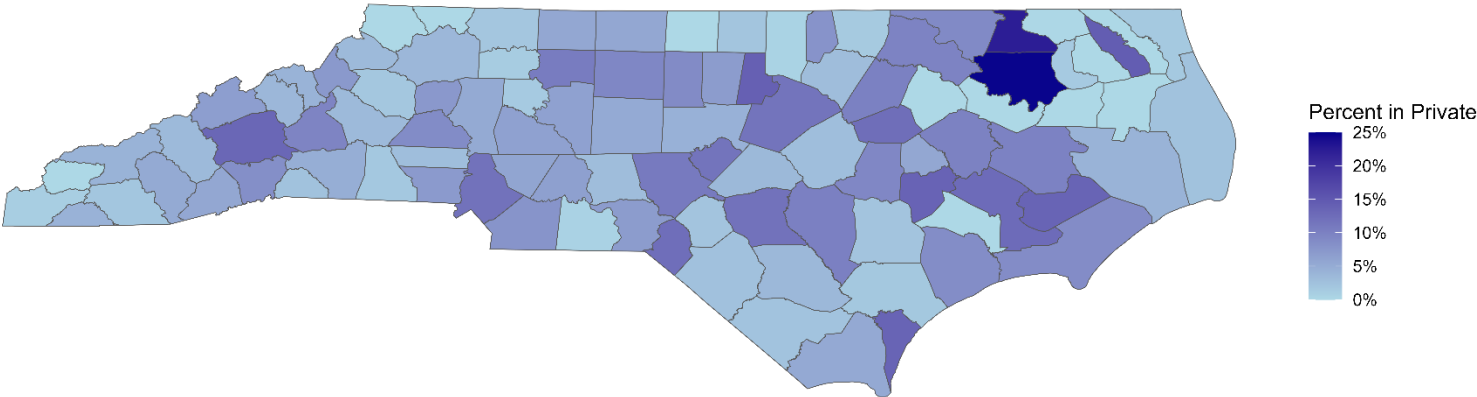**Figure 8. Percentage of Students Enrolled in Private Schools: School Year 2024-25**

Figure 9. Projected Percentage of Students Enrolled in Private Schools: School Year 2029-30
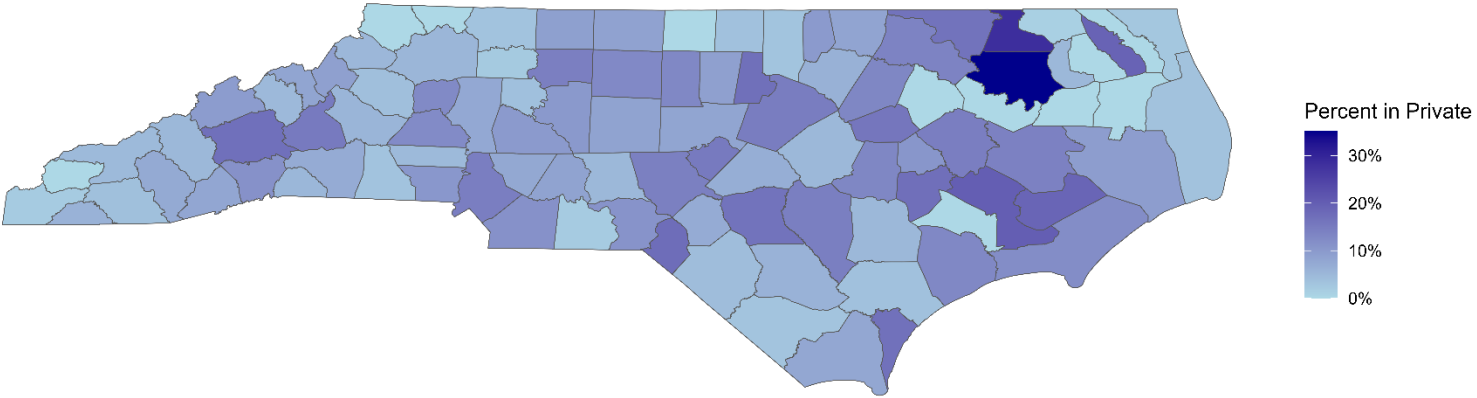*Forecast Series: Baseline (Highest Public Enrollment)*

The baseline is very similar to the 2024-25 percentages, only marginally higher.

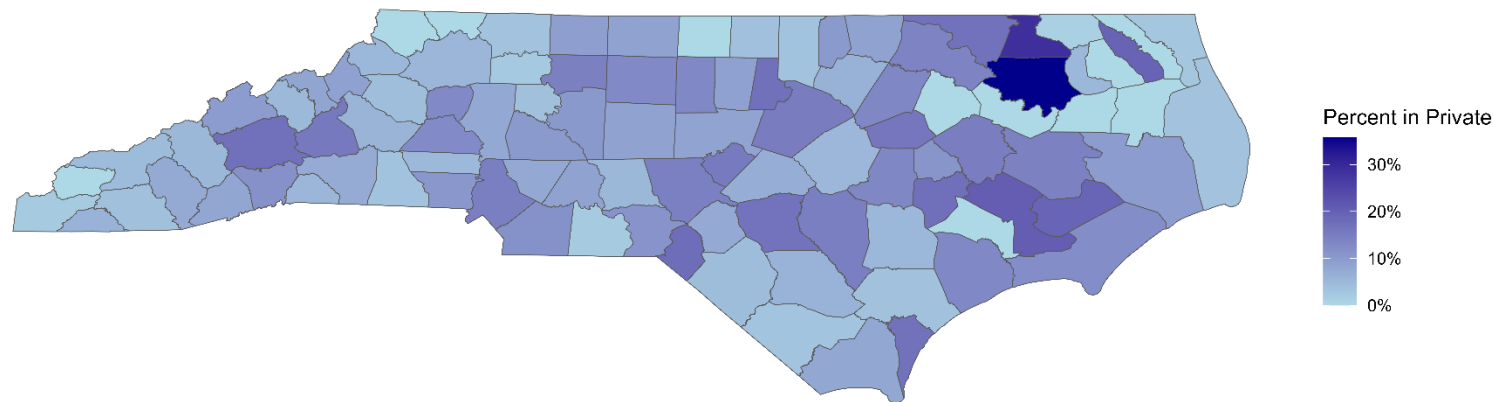**Figure 10. Projected Percentage of Students Enrolled in Private Schools: School Year 2029-30**
Forecast Series: Medium Public Enrollment

In the medium series we can see that the darkest colors in the map are now in the 30% range instead of the 20% range. In the low series we see very similar results to the medium series, but just slightly higher.

Figure 11. Projected Percentage of Students Enrolled in Private Schools: School Year 2029-30
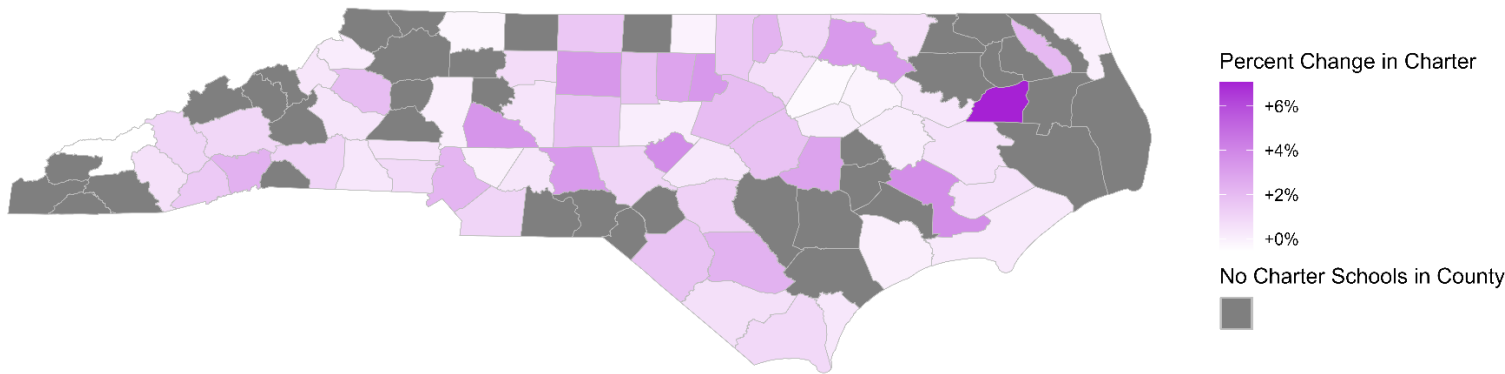
Forecast Series: Low Public Enrollment

Charter schools are also differentially growing throughout the state. We can see that several counties – in grey – do not have any charter schools. The baseline the same for all scenarios.

Figure 12. Projected Percent Change of Students Enrolled in Charter Schools: School Year 2024-25 to 2029-30

Forecast Series: a_baseline

Finally, we look at the number of students enrolled within a county versus the population projections for the age 5-17 population by county from NCOSBM.[4] We do expect some counties to have significantly more or less of their population enrolled in school in their counties than others. This could be due to significant numbers of students who live in one county but attend school (especially charters and private schools) in another county. Below we can see the 10 counties with the lowest implied number of 5–17-year-olds in their county actually attending school within their county.

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[4] Data available from NC OSBM here: https://www.osbm.nc.gov/facts-figures/population-demographics/state-demographer/countystate-population-projections

Table 3. Lowest Counties: Percent of Ages 5-17 Enrolled in County

County	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Warren	82%	81%	79%	76%	74%	73%	72%	72%	71%	71%
Onslow	99%	99%	97%	95%	92%	88%	85%	82%	79%	77%
Caswell	89%	88%	89%	84%	83%	82%	82%	83%	83%	84%
Jackson	85%	85%	84%	84%	84%	83%	83%	83%	84%	85%
Franklin	95%	94%	86%	85%	84%	83%	83%	83%	84%	85%
Hoke	96%	95%	95%	94%	94%	93%	93%	92%	91%	91%
Catawba	99%	96%	95%	94%	94%	93%	93%	93%	93%	93%
Davie	100%	100%	98%	97%	96%	95%	95%	95%	94%	94%
Chowan	100%	102%	100%	97%	95%	94%	93%	93%	94%	94%
Davidson	100%	96%	94%	91%	91%	90%	90%	91%	92%	95%

Many of the lowest percentage counties in terms of students who likely attend school outside of the county are either near larger cities just over county boundaries or are home to large numbers of military children who may attend school on the base and would not be included in our enrollment numbers. Below we see the counties with the highest implied percentages of students attending their schools versus the number of children who live in the county. Many of these are counties that are near large population centers or are near some of the counties with the lowest percentages of enrolled students per population of school attending age.
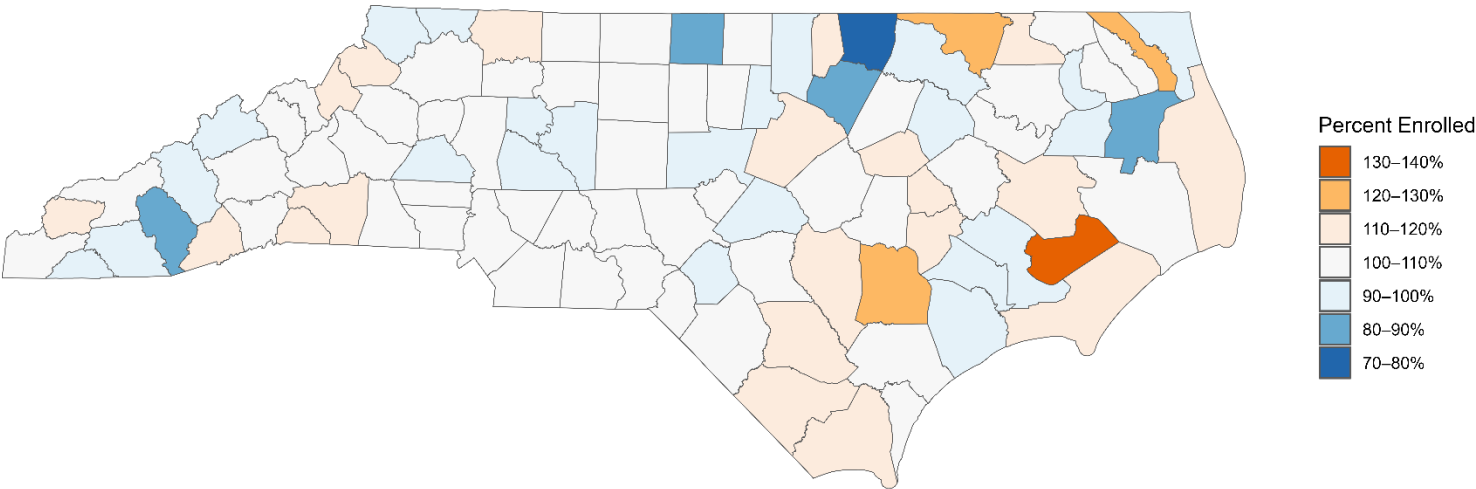
Table 4. Highest Counties: Percent of Ages 5-17 Enrolled in County

County	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Pamlico	132%	133%	147%	143%	136%	138%	140%	142%	147%	152%
Camden	107%	113%	115%	118%	123%	130%	135%	140%	145%	148%
Hyde	115%	105%	98%	98%	105%	109%	115%	121%	127%	132%
Brunswick	107%	109%	111%	114%	116%	118%	121%	123%	125%	126%
Watauga	113%	112%	116%	115%	117%	119%	121%	123%	125%	126%
Carteret	112%	112%	112%	112%	116%	116%	118%	121%	122%	124%
Perquimans	98%	100%	101%	103%	107%	109%	114%	118%	121%	124%
Lee	101%	101%	107%	107%	108%	110%	113%	116%	120%	124%
Northampton	122%	127%	124%	122%	124%	125%	125%	126%	126%	123%
Rutherford	108%	110%	112%	113%	113%	115%	117%	119%	121%	123%

Overall, these results point to one of the limitations of this work. We are focused on where students attend school, but not where they live. It would be helpful to better understand the overlaps between these two differing concepts. One additional potential issue with mismatch related to Table 3 and 4, beyond those presented are the potential for undercounts in 2020 Census and thus under estimation/projection of school age population. The latest population estimates/projections made some adjustments to account for the potential undercount, but this is still an issue to be aware of and being monitoring to improve estimates/projections for school age populations.

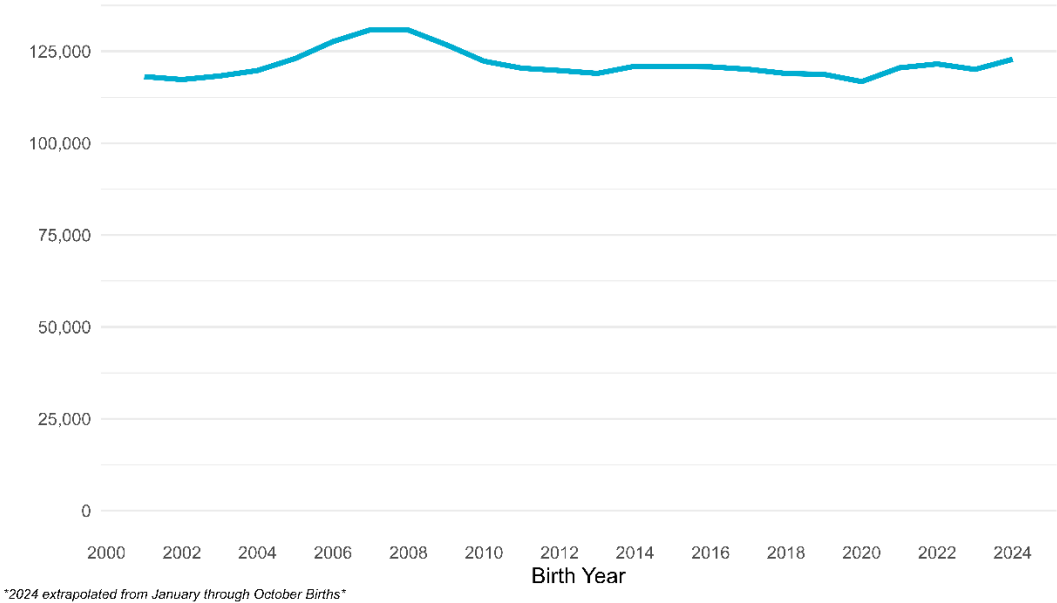**Figure 13. Percent of Population Ages 5-17 Enrolled in Any School Type**
School Year 2024-25

The map above highlights the population of school aged children versus total enrollment within a county. We can see that only select counties are at the extremes of over/underestimating populations, and that most are within 10% either way of matching with the aged 5-17 population.

We also showcase births for North Carolina from the past 25 years. After peaking in 2007-2008, births were in general decline into 2020. In the years since then, births have been on the rise, resulting in higher enrollment projections in the later years of our forecast.

Figure 14. North Carolina Births: 2001 through 2024

2024 extrapolated from January through October Births

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Hurricane Helene Impact

The extensive damage and school closures resulting from Hurricane Helene introduce uncertainty into our enrollment forecast for the affected counties. Important factors contributing to the uncertainty in our forecasts due to Hurricane Helene include infrastructure recovery timelines, family displacement, and economic impacts. These elements lead to the potential for over/under forecasting of enrollment in counties affected by Helene, as well as the rest of North Carolina. We will be continuing to monitor recovery efforts throughout the state, and will incorporate this information as necessary for future forecasts.

We understand that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designated 39 counties in western North Carolina that experienced flooding and infrastructure damage for federal disaster assistance. The NCDPI requested support to 28 school districts including 459 public schools and 24 public charter schools from the State Board of Education.

1- Year Forecast Evaluation

We also have updated the 1-year forecast to ensure that we are taking advantage of the most recent and updated data while also ensuring that disrupted patterns during the COVID-19 pandemic do not unduly impact the forecast. Specifically, we made changes to both the public LEA and charter school forecasts. Our public LEA updates were based on changes in assumptions, while changes in our charter forecasts were based on new data provided by your team at NCDPI.

1-Year Forecast Public LEA Methodology

For public LEAs the changes in assumptions included:
1. Updating the births five years prior to kindergarten ratio to move it closer to historical averages, and away from post-covid depressed levels. In general, we have seen upticks in this ratio over the lows seen in the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we have not seen a full return to historical patterns. We have changed to using a weighted average of this ratio from the 2023-24, 2019-20, and 2018-19 school years. In the prior run we used 2023-24, 2022-23, and 2019-20. After a good deal of inspection it was clear that 2022-23 was still highly impacted in some schools, while 2023-24 was only significantly depressed for a few places. This points to an overall improvement in this ratio continuing.
2. Updating the weights on the weighted average of the grade progression ratios (GPRs) for all other grades. We use a 3-year average of grade progression ratios from the 2023-24, 2022-23, and 2021-22 school years, we also tested using pre-pandemic GPRs, but the impact was minimal. Given the changes coming out of the pandemic we have weighted the most recent year at 50% and the prior two years at 25% each. In the prior run this weighting was 40%, 30%, and 30%. Again, variability in recovery from the pandemic drove this decision.
3. We have exempted LEAs from a process of subtracting out the likely impact of new charter schools in the next school year. While this impacts a small number of LEAs, we were making a direct assumption that not only would these new schools open next year, but that the impact would be exactly what was in their applications. This is too much of an unknown for this type of forecast.

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1-Year Forecast Charter LEA Methodology

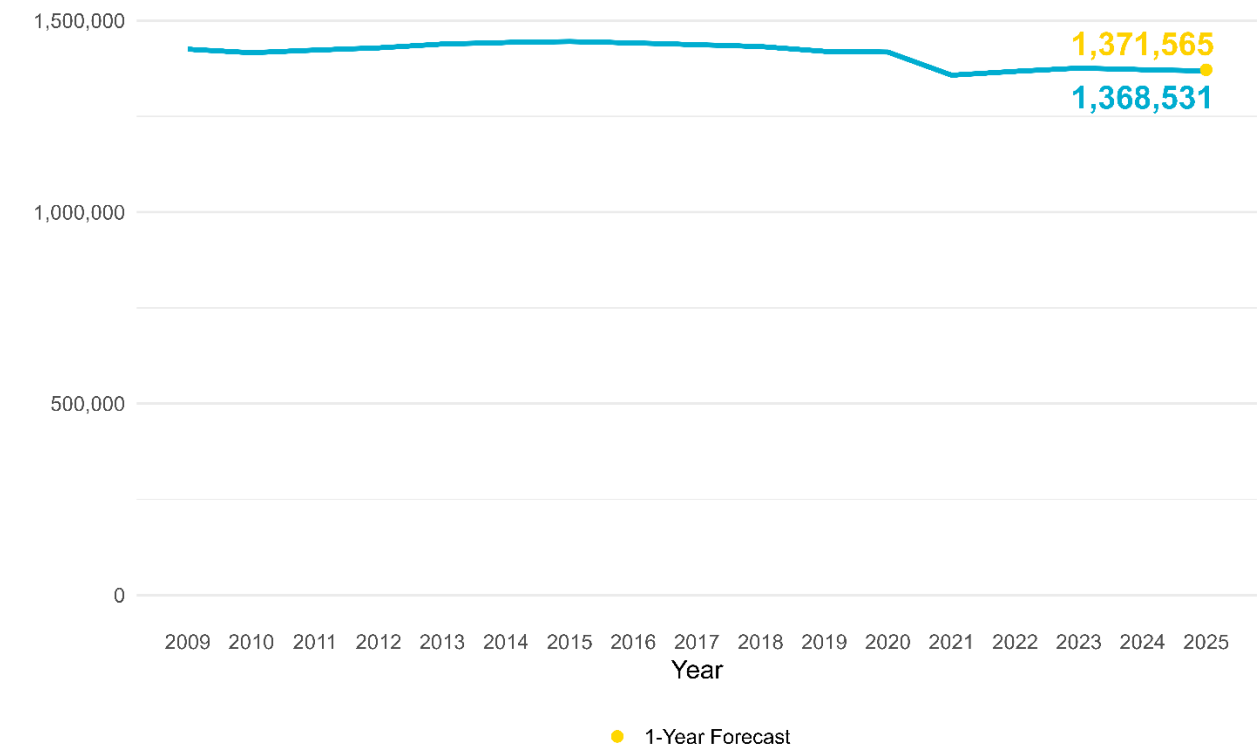For charter schools the changes in assumptions included:

1. A change to a true time series forecasting model for total enrollment by charter school. Prior to this, the only charter growth that was included was for either new charter school openings, or for schools who were in their first 5 years of opening who were still growing into their approved enrollment numbers per their applications. Since the NCDPI team was able to get us forecasted growth provided directly from the charter schools we were able to take this information into account. However, we did not just assume this forecast was correct, we did several things to update the forecast. Specifically:
   a. We started with a time-series forecast model of total enrollment by charter school based on historical patterns. We tested several models, but the best fit was a damped Holt's method (with phi = 0.95).
   b. However, these methods would not work for charters that had been opened less than five years. For those we went to the totals that were on their application for the 2024-25 school year.
   c. Next, if our forecast was higher than the one provided by the charter school, we overwrote the forecast with the forecast they provided.
   d. Next, if the forecast was negative, we changed the forecast to the 2023-24 school year total.
   e. Finally, if the forecast created an increase of over 15%, we decreased the overall forecast to a 15% increase.
   f. We then used the 2024 grade distribution to create a by grade distribution for 2024-25.

2024-25 | 5-Year Enrollment Forecast
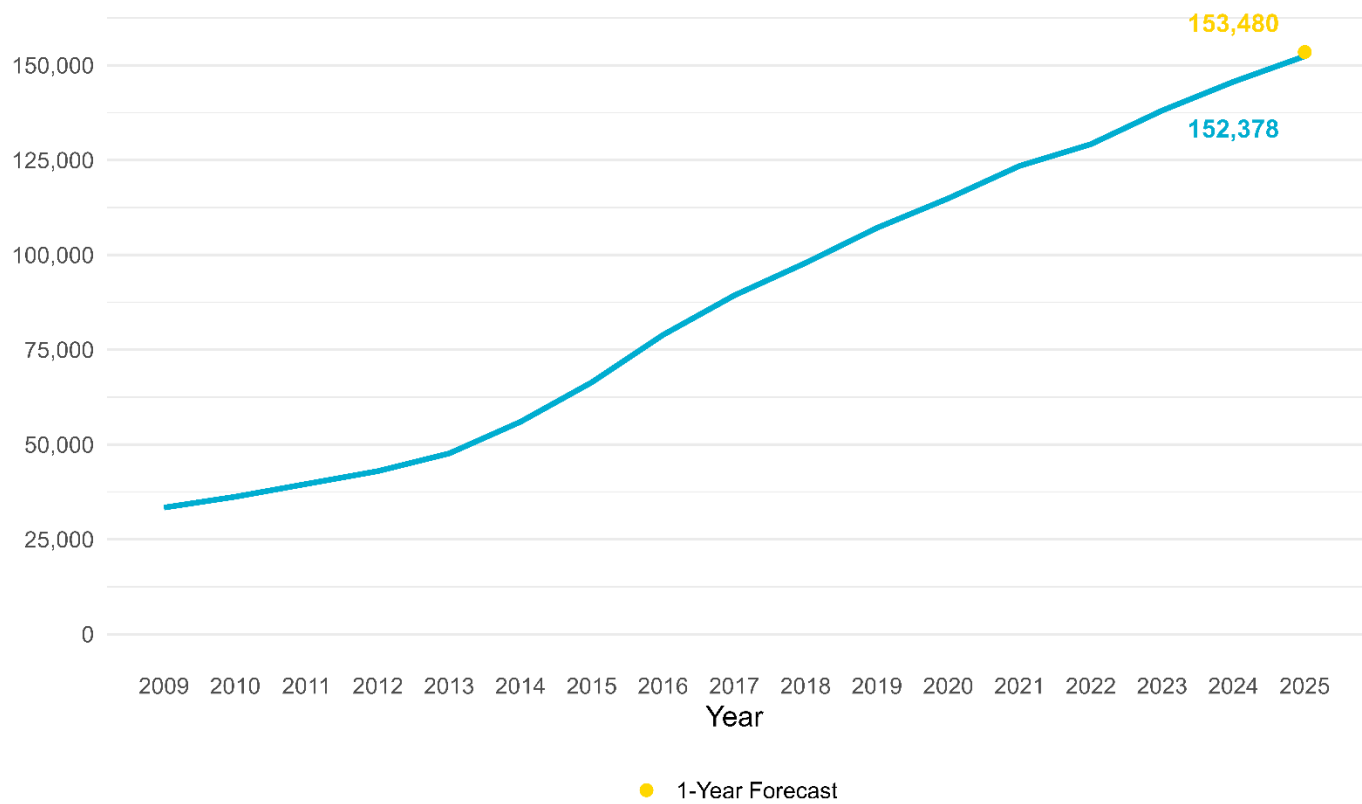
1-Year Forecast Evaluation – 2025

The total LEA public and charter school enrollment numbers in 2025 from last year's 1-year forecast were very close to those reported for 2024-25 school year. The forecasts for both school types were just slightly higher than actual enrollment, with the public enrollment forecast being 0.2% higher, and charter being 0.7% higher. The forecast did not underestimate any enrollments when combining all grades together for the county and LEA level, for both public and charter enrollment.

Figure 15. Public LEA Enrollment 2025 vs 1-Year Forecast

We can see in Figures 15 and 16, a slight overestimation in 2025 from the 1-year forecast compared to the reported numbers.
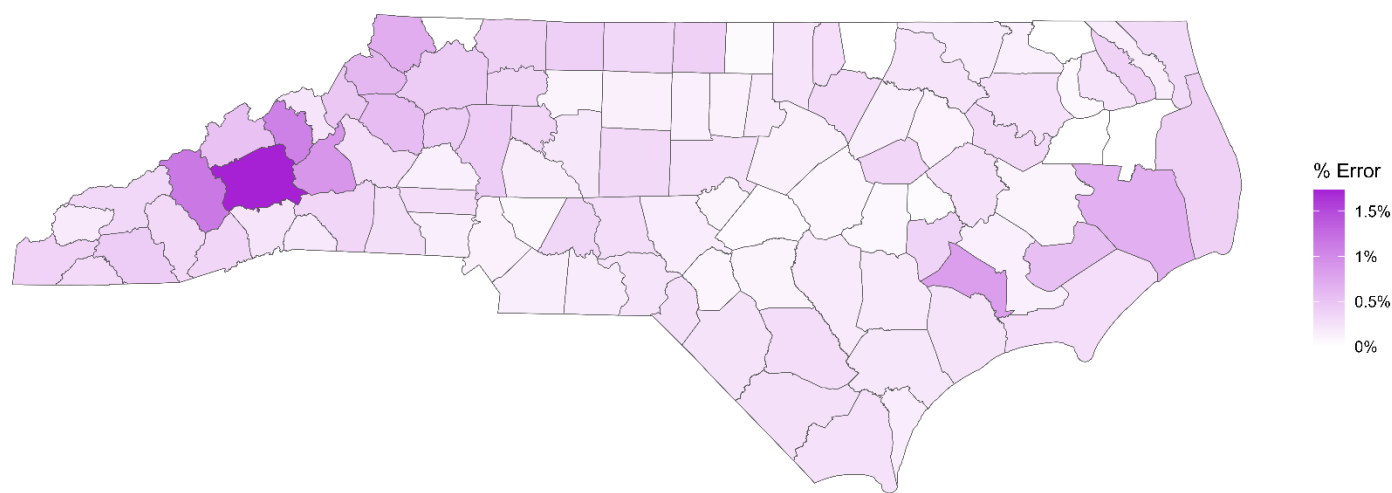
Figure 16. LEA Charter Enrollment 2025 vs 1-Year Forecast

For public schools at the LEA level in 2025, the forecasts were generally close to actual enrollment, with an average error of 0.3% when combining all grades. As mentioned above, the 1-year forecast never forecasted less than the total number of students for an LEA. The biggest relative errors for an LEA came from Buncombe County Schools, Asheville City Schools, Haywood County Schools, Elkin City Schools, and Yancey County Schools, overestimating enrollment by 2.8% to 1.1%. Buncombe County Schools was the only LEA with error over 2%, the rest were 1.5% or below. All other 2025 LEA errors were below 1%.
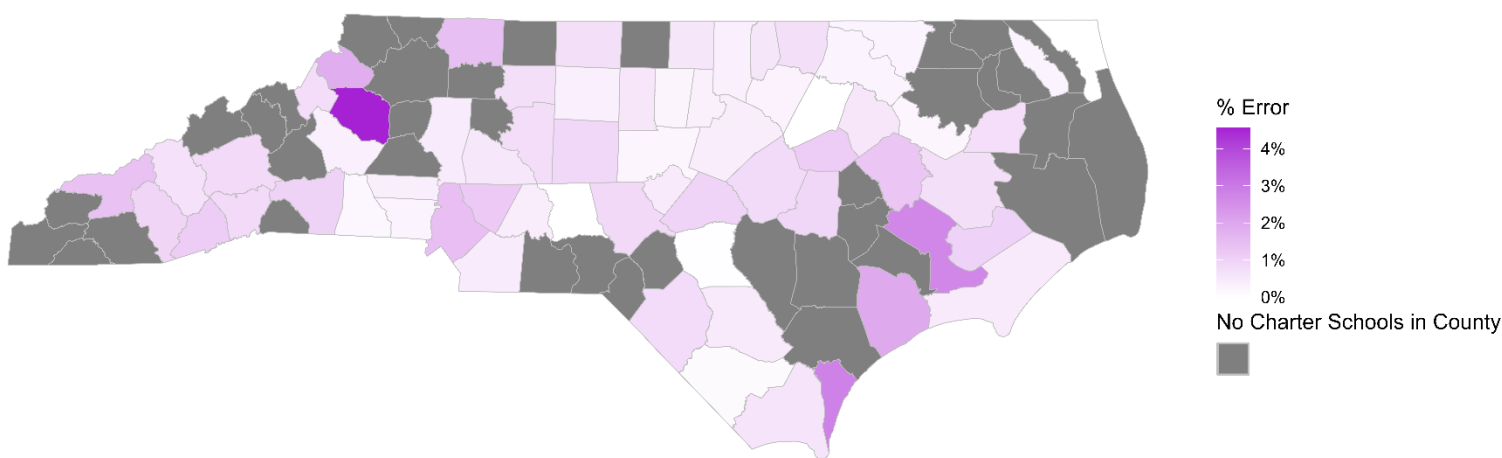
Another piece to consider in evaluation of the forecast is how much of these errors can be contributed to potential under reporting of enrollment, and/or actual losses due to Hurricane Helene. In order to examine this, we have mapped errors at the county level for public and charter schools. We can see that some counties in the western part of North Carolina have higher errors, especially in public enrollment. While not certain, there is a possibility at least some of the error is due to changes in enrollment due to the hurricane or under reporting of enrollment due to the hurricane and recovery.

Figure 17. County Public LEA Enrollment: 1-Year Forecast vs 2025 Actual

The map above depicts errors for public LEA enrollment at the county level. Buncombe, which contains both Asheville City Schools and Buncombe County Schools, stands out, with an overestimate just over 1.5% for the county. Also more visible are Haywood, Yancey, and McDowell counties, with errors near 1%.

Figure 18. County Charter LEA Enrollment: 1-Year Forecast vs 2025 Actual

The 1-year forecast at the county level for charters was good overall. The forecast did not underestimate any counties, averaging an error of 0.8% across all counties. The largest relative county errors came from Caldwell at around 4.6%, and New Hanover and Craven around 2.8%. All other county errors were below 2%.

At the LEA level, the forecast for charter schools were also close to the observed totals. The average error was 0.9%, with the 1-year forecast, again, never being below the actual enrollment at the total school level. The largest errors were in Wilmington School of the Arts, Movement School Eastland, and Movement Charter School, with errors of 23%, 23%, and 10%, respectively. Oak Hill Charter School, Success Institute Charter, and The Mountain Community School overestimated from 4.5% to 3%, however these are smaller schools, with total errors ranging from 3 to 11 students. Every other school was below a 3% overestimate. Below are tables of the forecast errors for public and charter schools at the county level.

Table 5a. County Public LEA & Charter Enrollment: 1-Year Forecast vs 2025 Actual

County	Public 2025 Enrollment	Public 2025 Projection	Public Projection vs 2025	Public Projection vs 2025 Percent Difference	Charter 2025 Enrollment	Charter 2025 Projection	Charter Projection vs 2025	Charter Projection vs 2025 Percent Difference
Statewide	1,368,531	1,371,565	3,034	0.22%	152,378	153,480	1,102	0.72%
Alamance	22,338	22,368	30	0.13%	3,069	3,086	17	0.55%
Alexander	4,183	4,201	18	0.43%	-	-	-	-
Alleghany	1,279	1,279	0	0.00%	-	-	-	-
Anson	2,888	2,893	5	0.17%	-	-	-	-
Ashe	2,555	2,573	18	0.70%	-	-	-	-
Avery	1,686	1,694	8	0.47%	129	130	1	0.78%
Beaufort	5,460	5,465	5	0.09%	417	420	3	0.72%
Bertie	1,607	1,611	4	0.25%	-	-	-	-
Bladen	3,772	3,783	11	0.29%	830	834	4	0.48%
Brunswick	13,475	13,508	33	0.24%	1,512	1,521	9	0.60%
Buncombe	25,434	25,876	442	1.74%	3,254	3,281	27	0.83%
Burke	11,173	11,206	33	0.30%	566	568	2	0.35%
Cabarrus	40,499	40,531	32	0.08%	2,598	2,629	31	1.19%
Caldwell	10,272	10,331	59	0.57%	241	252	11	4.56%
Camden	1,911	1,914	3	0.16%	-	-	-	-
Carteret	7,728	7,750	22	0.28%	205	206	1	0.49%
Caswell	2,025	2,033	8	0.40%	-	-	-	-
Catawba	21,952	21,982	30	0.14%	-	-	-	-
Chatham	8,790	8,812	22	0.25%	1,385	1,388	3	0.22%
Cherokee	2,924	2,935	11	0.38%	-	-	-	-
Chowan	1,672	1,673	1	0.06%	-	-	-	-
Clay	1,254	1,258	4	0.32%	-	-	-	-
Cleveland	13,985	14,024	39	0.28%	1,175	1,177	2	0.17%
Columbus	7,190	7,209	19	0.26%	907	908	1	0.11%
Craven	11,822	11,838	16	0.14%	369	379	10	2.71%
Cumberland	48,374	48,419	45	0.09%	1,821	1,822	1	0.05%
Currituck	4,518	4,532	14	0.31%	50	50	0	0.00%
Dare	4,771	4,790	19	0.40%	-	-	-	-
Davidson	22,607	22,654	47	0.21%	655	660	5	0.76%
Davie	5,991	6,012	21	0.35%	-	-	-	-
Duplin	9,560	9,578	18	0.19%	-	-	-	-
Durham	31,024	31,079	55	0.18%	8,360	8,389	29	0.35%
Edgecombe	6,181	6,188	7	0.11%	1,068	1,074	6	0.56%
Forsyth	50,550	50,598	48	0.09%	3,843	3,871	28	0.73%
Franklin	7,855	7,880	25	0.32%	1,016	1,019	3	0.30%
Gaston	30,573	30,616	43	0.14%	4,593	4,605	12	0.26%
Gates	1,373	1,373	0	0.00%	-	-	-	-
Graham	1,065	1,067	2	0.19%	-	-	-	-
Granville	6,273	6,287	14	0.22%	1,970	1,977	7	0.36%
Greene	2,706	2,707	1	0.04%	-	-	-	-
Guilford	66,055	66,142	87	0.13%	10,894	10,934	40	0.37%
Halifax	5,259	5,271	12	0.23%	1,098	1,101	3	0.27%
Harnett	19,844	19,855	11	0.06%	514	519	5	0.97%
Haywood	6,298	6,370	72	1.14%	614	618	4	0.65%
Henderson	12,552	12,581	29	0.23%	950	958	8	0.84%
Hertford	2,222	2,225	3	0.14%	-	-	-	-
Hoke	8,496	8,503	7	0.08%	-	-	-	-
Hyde	441	444	3	0.68%	-	-	-	-
Iredell	26,490	26,606	116	0.44%	4,970	4,992	22	0.44%
Jackson	3,333	3,344	11	0.33%	317	320	3	0.95%

Table 5b. County Public LEA & Charter Enrollment: 1-Year Forecast vs 2025 Actual

County	Public 2025 Enrollment	Public 2025 Projection	Public Projection vs 2025	Public Projection vs 2025 Percent Difference	Charter 2025 Enrollment	Charter 2025 Projection	Charter Projection vs 2025	Charter Projection vs 2025 Percent Difference
Johnston	37,030	37,061	31	0.08%	3,662	3,692	30	0.82%
Jones	954	962	8	0.84%	-	-	-	-
Lee	9,152	9,161	9	0.10%	1,467	1,474	7	0.48%
Lenoir	8,106	8,136	30	0.37%	-	-	-	-
Lincoln	11,426	11,459	33	0.29%	2,714	2,724	10	0.37%
Macon	4,379	4,398	19	0.43%	-	-	-	-
Madison	2,060	2,071	11	0.53%	-	-	-	-
Martin	2,547	2,555	8	0.31%	448	449	1	0.22%
Mcdowell	5,311	5,359	48	0.90%	-	-	-	-
Mecklenburg	141,726	141,894	168	0.12%	25,048	25,414	366	1.46%
Mitchell	1,712	1,716	4	0.23%	-	-	-	-
Montgomery	3,433	3,443	10	0.29%	233	233	0	0.00%
Moore	12,927	12,948	21	0.16%	1,612	1,626	14	0.87%
Nash	12,973	12,992	19	0.15%	851	851	0	0.00%
New Hanover	24,560	24,599	39	0.16%	2,439	2,508	69	2.83%
Northampton	1,177	1,179	2	0.17%	1,143	1,146	3	0.26%
Onslow	27,076	27,141	65	0.24%	103	105	2	1.94%
Orange	18,007	18,029	22	0.12%	1,207	1,210	3	0.25%
Pamlico	1,089	1,095	6	0.55%	496	501	5	1.01%
Pasquotank	4,610	4,628	18	0.39%	760	762	2	0.26%
Pender	10,715	10,737	22	0.21%	-	-	-	-
Perquimans	1,742	1,746	4	0.23%	-	-	-	-
Person	4,329	4,331	2	0.05%	1,067	1,073	6	0.56%
Pitt	23,857	23,918	61	0.26%	621	629	8	1.29%
Polk	1,986	1,990	4	0.20%	-	-	-	-
Randolph	19,189	19,251	62	0.32%	2,254	2,274	20	0.89%
Richmond	6,325	6,339	14	0.22%	-	-	-	-
Robeson	20,340	20,389	49	0.24%	767	773	6	0.78%
Rockingham	10,849	10,885	36	0.33%	842	848	6	0.71%
Rowan	17,564	17,591	27	0.15%	932	937	5	0.54%
Rutherford	7,161	7,186	25	0.35%	1,802	1,820	18	1.00%
Sampson	10,694	10,713	19	0.18%	-	-	-	-
Scotland	5,207	5,221	14	0.27%	-	-	-	-
Stanly	8,689	8,719	30	0.35%	726	729	3	0.41%
Stokes	5,435	5,457	22	0.40%	-	-	-	-
Surry	10,048	10,088	40	0.40%	626	635	9	1.44%
Swain	1,798	1,804	6	0.33%	219	222	3	1.37%
Transylvania	3,150	3,161	11	0.35%	430	435	5	1.16%
Tyrrell	436	436	0	0.00%	-	-	-	-
Union	40,870	40,929	59	0.14%	4,412	4,432	20	0.45%
Vance	4,943	4,957	14	0.28%	2,280	2,293	13	0.57%
Wake	161,115	161,321	206	0.13%	23,965	24,063	98	0.41%
Warren	1,503	1,503	0	0.00%	140	141	1	0.71%
Washington	975	975	0	0.00%	268	270	2	0.75%
Watauga	4,537	4,565	28	0.62%	161	164	3	1.86%
Wayne	17,113	17,125	12	0.07%	1,321	1,333	12	0.91%
Wilkes	8,201	8,238	37	0.45%	-	-	-	-
Wilson	10,220	10,256	36	0.35%	1,935	1,957	22	1.14%
Yadkin	4,958	4,976	18	0.36%	-	-	-	-
Yancey	2,042	2,064	22	1.08%	-	-	-	-

Appendix A

Figures

Tables