

NORTH CAROLINA LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

Joint Legislative Study Committee
on the Division of Local School Administrative Units

Legislative Analysis Division
North Carolina General Assembly
February 21, 2018

STRUCTURE FOR ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

- The NC Constitution requires the General Assembly to provide for a general and uniform system of free public schools. Art. IX, Sec. 2.
- The Constitution does not mandate the local unit of government for organization of the free public schools.

HOW HAS THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ORGANIZED ADMINISTRATION
OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

- Public schools have primarily been organized using the county as the geographic area for administration.
- G.S. 115C-66 provides that each county of the State is classified as a county school administrative unit.

HOW HAS THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ORGANIZED ADMINISTRATION
OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

- G.S. 115C-66 also provides for city school administrative units, classified as an area within a county or adjacent parts of two or more contiguous counties that have been approved by the State Board of Education as such a unit for purposes of school administration.

ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN COUNTY AND CITY UNITS?

- G.S. 115C-5(6) defines a local school administrative unit as “A subdivision of the public school system which is governed by a local board of education. It may be a city school administrative unit, a county school administrative unit, or a city-county school administrative unit.”
- G.S. 115C-66 provides that all local school administrative units, whether city or county, shall be dealt with by the State school authorities in all matters of school administration in the same way.

ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN COUNTY AND CITY UNITS?

- All local school administrative units, both county and city, are organized in the same manner:
 - The LSAU is under the supervision and control of a board of education.
 - A superintendent is the administrative officer of the LSAU.

HISTORICAL TRENDS IN LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

- Beginning in the 1870s, some cities and towns asked the General Assembly for the authority to create special chartered school districts separate from the county school districts.
- Between 1870 and 1957, 74 special chartered school districts were created, leading to 174 total districts.
- The trend reversed in 1960, with the merger of the Charlotte City System with the Mecklenburg County System. No new units have been created since 1957.

HOW MANY LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS TODAY?

- Since 2004, there have been 115 local school administrative units in the State.
 - 100 county school administrative units
 - 15 city school administrative units

DIVISION OF LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

- There is no current statutory method for division of local school administrative units - a local act of the General Assembly would be required.

MERGERS OF LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

- There are several methods in statute for merging school units.
- 2 statutes provide for intra-county mergers:
 - Merger of units within a county by local boards of education (G.S. 115C-67)
 - Merger of units within a county by county commissioners (G.S. 115C-68.1)
- 1 statute provides for the dissolution of city school units (G.S. 115C-68.2)

MERGERS OF LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

- Two statutes provide for inter-district mergers:
 - Merger of units in contiguous counties by local initiative (G.S. 115C-68)
 - Merger of contiguous county units by State Board of Education (G.S. 115C-66.5)
- Mergers can also be made by a local act of the General Assembly.

SIZE OF CURRENT NORTH CAROLINA LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS?

- Because counties are the primary geographic unit used as the basis for school administrative units, student enrollment by districts varied widely:

Characteristic	LSAU	# of Students
Smallest	Hyde County Schools	578
Largest	Wake County Schools	160,429
Median	Stokes County Schools	5,902
Average	Rockingham County Schools	12,075

SIZE RANGES OF LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

	# of Students	# of County LSAUs	# of City LSAUs
Category 1	> than 100,001	2	0
Category 2	40,001 - 100,000	4	0
Category 3	25,001 - 40,000	6	0
Category 4	15,001 - 25,000	12	0
Category 5	10,001 - 15,000	10	1
Category 6	5,001 - 10,000	28	2
Category 7	3,201 - 5,000	10	3
Category 8	< than 3,200	28	9
Total		100	15

NATIONAL TRENDS?

Characteristic	State	# of Districts	# of Students
Most Districts?	Texas	1,027	5,135,400
Fewest Districts?	Hawaii	1	182,600
Median?	New Hampshire	179	186,800
	Georgia	180	1,704,600
National Total?		13,391	49,750,400

NATIONAL TRENDS?

School Year	Number of Districts Nationally
1939-40	117,108
1949-50	83,718
1959-60	40,520
1970-71	17,995
1979-80	15,929
1989-90	15,367
1999-2000	14,928
2013-2014	13,491

HOW DOES NORTH CAROLINA COMPARE TO STATES WITH SIMILAR STUDENT POPULATIONS?

State	2013 Population Estimate	# of School Districts 2013-2014
Ohio	1,722,700	618
Georgia	1,704,600	180
Michigan	1,541,400	548
North Carolina	1,524,900	115
New Jersey	1,334,400	590
Virginia	1,269,100	134
Washington	1,052,400	298

HOW DOES NORTH CAROLINA COMPARE TO OTHER SOUTHERN STATES?

State	2013 Student Population Estimate	# of School Districts 2013-2014
Alabama	739,300	137
Florida	2,715,800	67
Georgia	1,704,600	180
Kentucky	682,300	174
North Carolina	1,524,900	115
South Carolina	738,800	84
Tennessee	1,012,600	140
Virginia	1,269,100	134

ACADEMIC OUTCOMES BY LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT SIZE

- This analysis presents a high level overview of school unit performance within each category
- 2016-17 data serves as the basis of the analysis
- This analysis does not determine the statistical significance of its findings or control for variables other than district enrollment size.
- A more detailed study would be better able to determine influence of school unit size on academic outcomes

MEDIAN & WEIGHTED AVERAGE

- **Median**
 - For an odd-numbered data set, the median is the middle number
 - For an even-numbered data set, the median is the average of the two middle numbers
 - The median is used to lessen the effect of outliers
- **Weighted Average**
 - A weighted average adds or reduces weight to individual statistics relative to a chosen variable
 - In this analysis, the weight is based on enrollment, so larger districts in a particular category are weighed more heavily than smaller districts

END OF GRADE (EOG) & END OF COURSE EXAMS (EOC)

- EOGs refer to standardized exams given to students in grades 3-8
- EOCs are exams administered in certain high school subject areas
- Scores range from a Level 1 to a Level 5
- Level 3 = Grade Level Proficient
- Level 4 = Career and College Ready

EOG/EOC PERFORMANCE COMPOSITE - MEDIAN

Category	% Career and College Ready	% Grade Level Proficient
≥ 100,001	55.5	64.2
40,001 – 100,000	49.44	58.77
25,001 – 40,000	47.35	58.1
15,001 – 25,000	43.1	52.5
10,001 – 15,000	50.2	62
5,001 – 10,000	45.6	57.5
3,201 – 5,000	50	60.5
≤ 3,200	44.05	56.1
State Average	49.2	59.2

EOG/EOC PERFORMANCE COMPOSITE – WEIGHTED AVERAGE

Category	% Career and College Ready	% Grade Level Proficient
≥ 100,001	55.63	64.32
40,001 – 100,000	46.35	56.45
25,001 – 40,000	47.29	57.10
15,001 – 25,000	42.83	52.88
10,001 – 15,000	51.87	61.97
5,001 – 10,000	45.88	57.08
3,201 – 5,000	48.49	59.10
≤ 3,200	42.32	53.75
State Average	49.2	59.2

3RD GRADE READING EOG - MEDIAN

Category	% Career and College Ready	% Grade Level Proficient
≥ 100,001	51.8	62.9
40,001 – 100,000	45.70	57.39
25,001 – 40,000	45.35	58.75
15,001 – 25,000	40.9	52.25
10,001 – 15,000	48	60.5
5,001 – 10,000	44.7	56.4
3,201 – 5,000	48.3	61.9
≤ 3,200	41.25	54.95
State Average	46.1	57.8

3RD GRADE READING EOG – WEIGHTED AVERAGE

Category	% Career and College Ready	% Grade Level Proficient
≥ 100,001	52.01	63.07
40,001 – 100,000	43.30	55.35
25,001 – 40,000	44.05	55.75
15,001 – 25,000	40.64	52.33
10,001 – 15,000	48.43	60.30
5,001 – 10,000	42.33	54.77
3,201 – 5,000	47.30	59.04
≤ 3,200	41.05	53.54
State Average	46.1	57.8

MET OR EXCEEDED GROWTH - MEDIAN

Category	% Schools Met/Exceeded Growth
≥ 100,001	67.15
40,001 – 100,000	82.02
25,001 – 40,000	75.85
15,001 – 25,000	72.05
10,001 – 15,000	80
5,001 – 10,000	77.3
3,201 – 5,000	81.8
≤ 3,200	69.1

MET OR EXCEEDED GROWTH – WEIGHTED AVERAGE

Category	% Schools Met/Exceeded Growth
≥ 100,001	66.99
40,001 – 100,000	83.30
25,001 – 40,000	74.34
15,001 – 25,000	71.79
10,001 – 15,000	80.02
5,001 – 10,000	75.44
3,201 – 5,000	82.40
≤ 3,200	68.36

GRADUATION RATE - MEDIAN

Category	4-Year Cohort	5-Year Cohort
≥ 100,001	88.95	89.7
40,001 – 100,000	87.72	89.13
25,001 – 40,000	88.9	90.2
15,001 – 25,000	86.6	86.15
10,001 – 15,000	89.5	89.2
5,001 – 10,000	85.8	84.4
3,201 – 5,000	88	88.4
≤ 3,200	87.4	86
State Average	86.5	87.5

GRADUATION RATE – WEIGHTED AVERAGE

Category	4-Year Cohort	5-Year Cohort
≥ 100,001	88.93	89.66
40,001 – 100,000	87.72	88.95
25,001 – 40,000	87.57	88.99
15,001 – 25,000	86.04	86.13
10,001 – 15,000	87.33	87.47
5,001 – 10,000	85.29	85.92
3,201 – 5,000	88.17	89.01
≤ 3,200	78.00	78.09
State Average	86.5	87.5

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE GRADES - MEDIAN

Category	% A Schools	% B Schools	% C Schools	% D Schools	% F Schools
≥ 100,001	12.7	32.5	33.8	19.2	1.8
40,001 – 100,000	13.54	27.02	31.47	21.29	6.77
25,001 – 40,000	4.95	27.15	47.95	19.9	0
15,001 – 25,000	3.05	18.25	43.5	17.6	5.9
10,001 – 15,000	4.8	36	48	11.1	0
5,001 – 10,000	6.3	21.1	50	11.8	0
3,201 – 5,000	0	36.4	50	0	0
≤ 3,200	0	28.6	50	0	0

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE GRADES – WEIGHTED AVERAGE

Category	% A Schools	% B Schools	% C Schools	% D Schools	% F Schools
≥ 100,001	12.61	32.83	33.77	19.04	1.75
40,001 – 100,000	10.10	25.65	27.65	20.00	3.95
25,001 – 40,000	5.80	24.21	45.56	20.02	4.36
15,001 – 25,000	4.25	19.22	46.04	23.62	6.86
10,001 – 15,000	6.15	38.93	42.93	10.56	1.43
5,001 – 10,000	6.02	26.58	49.34	16.32	1.77
3,201 – 5,000	2.19	36.28	50.26	10.75	0.53
≤ 3,200	3.24	26.36	46.54	21.96	1.90

LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOL UNITS

	% Low-Performing
≥ 100,001	0
40,001 – 100,000	0
25,001 – 40,000	0
15,001 – 25,000	17%
10,001 – 15,000	0
5,001 – 10,000	10.3%
3,201 – 5,000	6.7%
≤ 3,200	13.9%

G.S. 115C-105.39A defines low-performing school units as units in which the majority of schools have been identified as low-performing.

A low-performing school is one that earns a school performance grade of D or F and a school growth score of “met expected growth” or “not met expected growth.” G.S. 115C-37.