

Type of school choice	Definition	National trends	Mecklenburg County
Charter schools	Publicly funded, privately run schools. Typically serve a broad geographical area.	In 2013, 2.5 million students were enrolled in charter schools. In 2003, enrollment was less than 1 million students. ¹ Charter schools were first opened in the 1970s as a way to spur innovation. 39 percent of charter schools have concentrated poverty compared to 24 percent of traditional schools. ²	In 2016, there are 25 charter schools in Mecklenburg County and 11 charter schools in the metro region that likely serve students who live in Mecklenburg. In 2015-2016, 15,535 students attended charter schools in Mecklenburg County. In North Carolina, charter schools do not receive funds for capital costs (e.g., for buildings) and are not required to provide transportation or a meal program.
Controlled choice	A plan that requires families to choose a school, but choices are restricted based on demographic balance (such as gender, socioeconomic status, race, etc.).	34 districts have used controlled choice plans for student enrollment, either by race or socioeconomic status. Some of the most well known are Cambridge, Mass.; Seattle, and Wake County, N.C.	Mecklenburg County does not use a controlled choice plan for student assignment.
Home school	The education of children at home, usually by their parents. Typically no government funds are provided, although in some states voucher plans can be used for home schooling.	In 2012, 3.4 percent of school age children (1,773,000 students) were home-schooled in the U.S., an increase from 2.2 percent in 2003. Data indicate that children living in the lowest income and highest income households are less likely to be home-schooled. ³	In the 2014-2015 school year an estimated 7,741 school-aged children in Mecklenburg County were being educated by their parent, legal guardian or a member of the household in which the student resides. ⁴
Interdistrict choice	A plan in which students may cross district lines to attend school. State-level per pupil expenditure funds follow the student, and transportation costs are usually provided.	Interdistrict choice is available in about 20 percent of states, ⁵ including: New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, California, and Washington.	This is not offered in North Carolina. Though unusual, residents of one county can pay to attend a school in another county. For example, a resident of Cabarrus County could pay to attend a school in Mecklenburg County.

¹ National Center for Education Statistics. (2016a). see: http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgb.asp

² Kena, G., et al. (2016). see: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016144.pdf>

³ National Center for Education Statistics. (2014). see: http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_206.10.asp

⁴ N.C. Division of Non-Public Education, 2016. See: <http://ncdoa.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Documents/hhh240.pdf>

⁵ Whitehurst, 2016. see: http://www.brookings.edu/~media/multimedia/interactives/2016/ecci/final/ecci_2015_final.pdf

Intradistrict choice	A plan that allows students to choose schools within one public school district. The plan might include the entire district or specific schools.	Intradistrict choice, also called open enrollment or common enrollment, is available in some states and districts. Specific plans vary widely. New York, Boston, Milwaukee, New Orleans, and Denver use a form of common enrollment.	Students can apply to a variety of school options within the district. Families apply using the online application during the established lottery periods. All students who meet the entry requirements for these schools are eligible to apply as long as they reside within Mecklenburg County. ⁶
Magnet schools	Public schools that offer specialized programs to attract students.	In 2012, 2.25 million students were enrolled in magnet schools. ⁷ Magnet schools are part of a school district and offer a focused theme meant to attract students. Magnet schools were first created in the late 1960s as a way to encourage voluntary desegregation.	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools offers various magnet themes, such as Visual and Performing Arts, World Languages, STEM, STEAM, Montessori, International Baccalaureate and many others. 1 in 4 schools in CMS are partial or full magnets and are generally the highest performing and most diverse schools in the district. ⁸
Dual enrollment/postsecondary options	Programs that enable high school students to enroll in college courses at government expense.	In 2011, 53 percent of 9-12 institutions reported that students were able to take courses for college credit. ⁹	CMS has several accelerated learning opportunities for students to earn college credit: Early College High School in partnership with UNC Charlotte; Middle College High Schools in partnership with Central Piedmont Community College.
Private school	Schools that are privately operated and funded and not regulated by a government entity.	In 2014, 5.4 million students (10 percent of all school-age children) attended private schools. In 2014, 38 percent of private school students were enrolled in Catholic schools. ¹⁰ Private school enrollment has been decreasing for a decade.	In 2016, 97,721 students enrolled in private schools in North Carolina. Mecklenburg County has 92 private schools, the highest number in the state, with 18,524 students enrolled. ¹¹
Residential choice	The ability for families to choose a residence based on the neighborhood school.	About 70 percent of students attend their assigned neighborhood school. ¹² While some families select their residence based on the neighborhood school assigned to their address, many families are unable to do so.	Survey data indicates that residential choice is a primary method of school choice in Mecklenburg County for families that earn about the average median income, but current data are insufficient to draw conclusions.

⁶ See: <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/StudentPlacement/Pages/FAQs.aspx>

⁷ National Center for Education Statistics, 2016b. See: http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgb.asp

⁸ See: <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/ci/MagnetPrograms/Pages/default.aspx>

⁹ Marken et al., 2013. See: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013002.pdf>

¹⁰ Kena, G., et al. (2016). see: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016144.pdf>

¹¹ See: <http://ncadmin.nc.gov/state-north-carolina-private-grade-k-12-school-statistics>

¹² Kena, G., et al. (2016). see: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016144.pdf>

Alternative schools/ second chance programs	Alternative schools and programs for students who have not demonstrated success in traditional public school settings	In 2008, 64 percent of districts reported having at least one alternative school or program for at-risk students. In 2008, 646,500 students attended alternative schools or programs. ¹³	Turning Point Academy is an alternative school in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools system that is designed to meet the education needs of students through therapeutic intervention services, behavior and academic prevention and intervention programs. ¹⁴
Virtual school	A web-based instructional platform that allows students to complete coursework online. Can be used to supplement classes in a place-based school, or enrollment can be completely virtual.	In 2015, there were 400 full-time virtual schools enrolling around 263,700 students. ¹⁵ Full-time virtual schools are more likely to serve regularly abled, white students who do not live in poverty. Full-time virtual schools have lower graduation rates and test scores than other school choice options. ¹⁶	Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools students who wish to participate full-time in online classes can enroll through the eLearning Academy. The N.C. Virtual School supports online course enrollment for all public school students. ¹⁷ The N.C. Virtual Academy is a charter school open to all students in North Carolina. ¹⁸
Voucher plans	A payment by the government that enables students to attend a private school of their choice.	Thirteen states and the District of Columbia provide state-funded school vouchers to qualifying students, typically students who qualify for free/reduced lunch. ¹⁹ While research indicates mixed findings, results are slightly positive, particularly for black students. ²⁰	The N.C. Opportunity Scholarship Act (2013) provides up to \$4,200 per qualified student for private school tuition. ²¹

¹³ Carver & Lewis, 2010. See: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/2010026.pdf>

¹⁴ See: <http://schools.cms.k12.nc.us/turningpointAE/Pages/Default.aspx>

¹⁵ Molnar et al., 2015. See: <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/virtual-schools-annual-2015>

¹⁶ Miron, G & Urschel, J. (2012).

¹⁷ See: <http://ncvps.org/>

¹⁸ See: <http://ncva.k12.com/>

¹⁹ National Conference of State Legislatures, 2016. See: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/voucher-law-comparison.aspx>

²⁰ Miron & Urschel, 2012.

²¹ See: <http://pefnc.org/nc-opportunity-scholarship/>