Charter schools are public schools that must be authorized by the NC State Board of Education to operate. Like traditional public schools, charter schools are primarily funded through state and local tax dollars and are prohibited from discriminating in admissions, having religious affiliations, or charging tuition. “Charter schools are held accountable through the State assessment and accountability system.” Because charter schools have open enrollment and often serve students from multiple counties, charter school profiles are aggregated up to the Prosperity-Zone level. In Southwest there are 56 charter schools and 12 traditional public school districts operating 500 schools.

1Charter Schools. 2023. NC Dept of Public Instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charter Schools</th>
<th>Traditional Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Schools</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Students</td>
<td>42,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total High Schools</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total High School Students</td>
<td>9,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged Students</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Race/Ethnic Composition of Grades K-12 in Southwest Schools, 2022

How students in Southwest charter schools are currently doing:
• 39% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading; 7,242 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. 2023
• 40% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math; 9,865 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. 2023
• 74% of 9th graders graduate within four years; 528 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. 2023
• 20% of students are chronically absent from school; 3,802 less needed to meet state goal of 11%. 2022

Southwest has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 431:1. 2022

3% of students drop out of high school (66 total students). 2022

How students in Southwest charter schools are planning for and enrolling in college:
• 70% of seniors completed the FAFSA in 2022; 181 more need to complete in 2022 to meet state goal of 80%. 2023
• 85% of graduates reported intentions to enroll in a postsecondary institution. 2022
• 72% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months. 2022

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates (within 12 months) for Select Groups in Southwest Schools, 2022

Note: Outcomes for groups with less than 10 students, <5% or >95% are not displayed.

Access to Postsecondary Credits
Students in Southwest completed 10 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials (industry-valued credential data available in Spring 2024) and 135 concentrations in 2022. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics; Information Technology; and Hospitality & Tourism.

1,856 high school students took at least one AP course (22%) (2022).
1,291 high school students participated in Career & College Promise programs (15%) (2022).

• 87% of students who enroll persist to their second year. 2022
• 75% of students who enroll earn a degree or certificate within 6 years. 2022

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION