TEACHER SHORTAGE

INTRODUCTION
WHAT SHORTAGE?

The teacher shortage is a demand and supply problem. It is "the inability to staff teacher vacancies at current wages with individuals qualified to teach in the fields needed." *(Carver-Thomas, D. & Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.)* **In South Carolina the teacher shortage is a combination of an increase in the number of open teaching positions and a decrease in the supply of potential first-year teachers.**

The increase in open teaching positions in recent years is based on several demand factors:

- increasing student enrollment,
- higher teacher turnover, and
- lower pupil-teacher ratios.

A fourth factor for 2018 was a one-time increase in teacher retirements.

As discussed above, the major supply issue is the decrease in college teacher preparation program graduates.

This fact sheet covers these demand and supply issues including highlighting the sources for filling teaching positions and the subject areas with the highest teacher vacancies. The primary sources of information are the "South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Report" documents published by the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention &

Factors Increasing the Demand for Teachers

- Increasing student enrollment
- Higher teacher turnover
- Lower pupil-teacher ratios
- 2018 spike in teacher retirements

Factor Decreasing the Supply of Teachers

- Drop in teacher education program graduates

Advancement (CERRA). For information on teacher salaries, see the "Teacher Salaries" fact sheet.

DEMAND FACTORS
THE NEED FOR MORE TEACHERS

Student Enrollment Growth

Student enrollment in the state and in Greenville County Schools continues to grow resulting in the need for more teachers. Over the seven-year period (2012-13 to 2019-20), total public-school enrollment in the state increased at an average annual rate of 1% with an average of 7,300 additional students per year. Greenville County Schools' enrollment had a one-time decrease in 2017-18 due to charter schools moving to the South Carolina Public Charter School District. Despite that drop, the school district added an average of 530 students per year over the seven-year period. *(State data includes charter school districts and special schools in the state.)*

Student Enrollment,
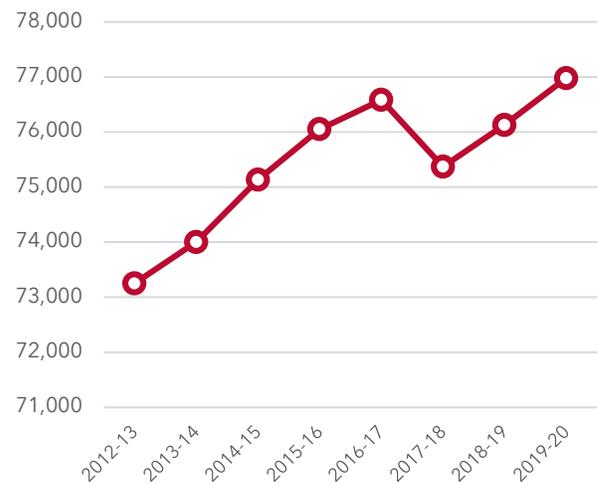## South Carolina Public Schools
School Years 2012-13 through 2019-20
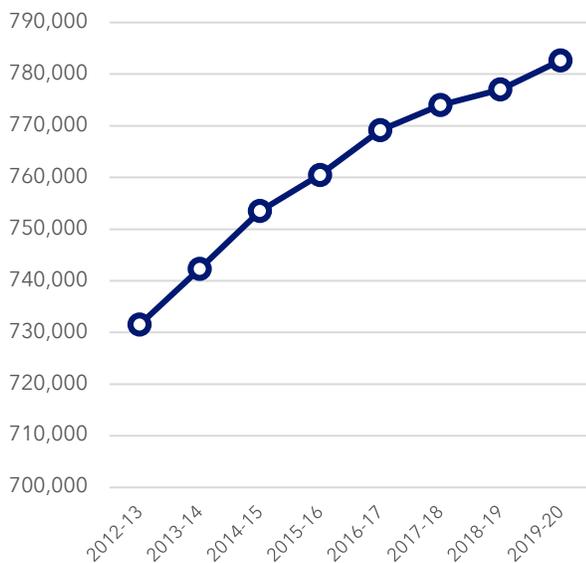
Note: Includes special schools and charter school districts. Source: "135-Day Active Headcount," South Carolina Department of Education. (https://ed.sc.gov/data/other/student-counts/active-student-headcounts/)

Student Enrollment,
Greenville County Schools
School Years 2012-13 through 2019-20

Source: "135-Day Active Headcount," South Carolina Department of Education. (https://ed.sc.gov/data/other/student-counts/active-student-headcounts/)

Higher Teacher Turnover

Another factor affecting the teacher shortage is teacher turnover. As the chart below demonstrates, the median teacher turnover rate among school districts (three-year average annual rate) increased from 9% in the 2011-12 school year to 13% in 2019-20. For the last two years, the district with the highest three-year rate saw 34% of its teachers turn over each year on average. As of this latest year, there were ten school districts that consistently had a teacher turnover rate above 20% and nearly one-third had a rate above 15%. Greenville County Schools' 3-year average turnover rate increased from 7.2% in 2011-12 to 11.2% for 2019-20 when it was the 27th lowest of the 77 reporting districts.

A project of
Public Education Partners
Greenville County

Teacher Turnover Rate, 3-Year Average, State School Districts

School Years 2011-12 through 2019-20
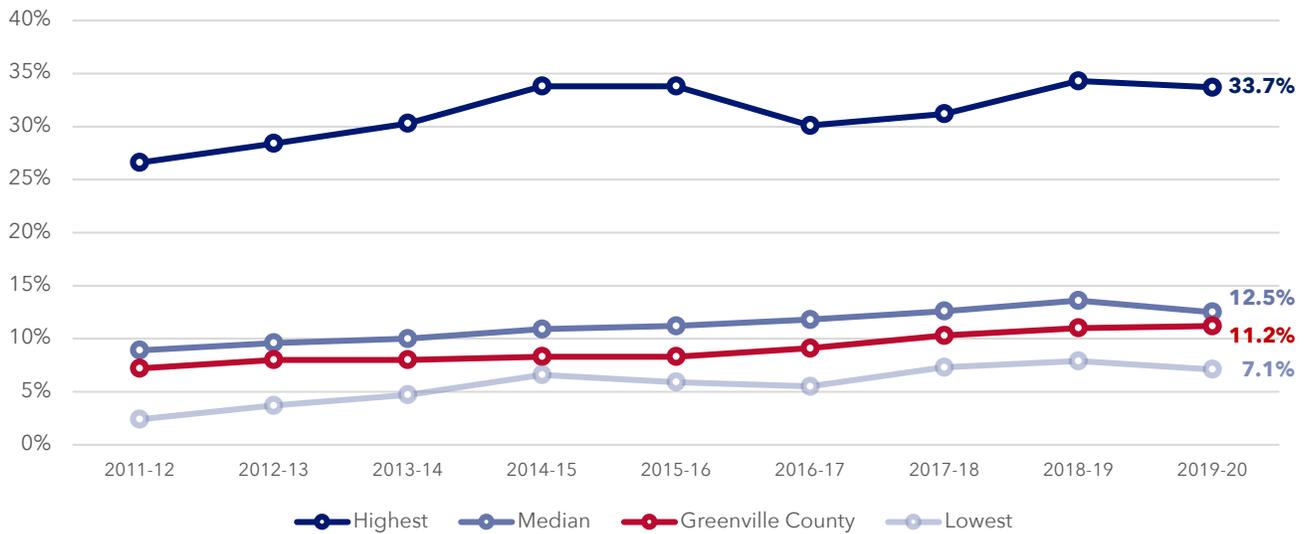
Source: Source: SC School Report Card. (online: https://screportcards.com).

Another statewide concern is the number of teachers who leave after their first year of teaching. Of the first-year teachers hired for the 2019-20 school year, 36% did not return to a position in the same district the next year.

Of the teachers who left their positions during or at the end of 2019-20, 42% had five or fewer years of classroom experience in South Carolina and 16% had one year or less.

> ## *Of the first-year teachers hired for the 2019-20 school year, 36% did not return to a position in the same district in 2020-21.*

Using data from the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, & Advancement (CERRA), there are three major reasons that teachers in South Carolina leave their current teaching position: leave for a teaching position in another school district in the state; retirement; and family-related, personal reasons (including staying home with children,

illness in family, relocation, military assignment and taking a teaching job closer to home). However, a large number of responses in CERRA's survey of school districts were "Reason not given by teacher" or "District does not collect this information."

For all school districts where a reason was given, 35% of teachers leaving their teaching position left to go to another South Carolina school district in 2020-21. An additional 12% remained in the education field but taught elsewhere or went to work in a non-teaching education position. Retirement accounted for 26% of the teachers who left their teaching position after the 2019-20 school year. Slightly more than 2% left for a COVID-19-related reason.

In Greenville County Schools in 2020 where a reason was given, 19% of teachers leaving their teaching position left to teach in another school district in the state. An additional 19% retired. There were no reported departures related to COVID-19. *("South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Report" and survey submission by Greenville County Schools, Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA)).*

Lowering of Pupil-Teacher Ratios

The Great Recession of 2007-09 led to an increase in school district pupil-teacher ratios as state funding was cut drastically. In recent years, pupil-teacher ratios were lowered in many districts to return them to pre-recession levels and, in some cases, to drop them below these levels. This has increased the demand for teachers.

2018 Spike in Teacher Retirements

A significant increase in the number of teachers retiring occurred in 2018. This was due, at least in part, to the end of the South Carolina Teacher and Employee Retirement Incentive (TERI).

Initiated in 2000 to keep experienced teachers in the classroom, the TERI program allowed teachers to work up to five years after they officially retired during which time their pension benefits were banked in a special account. They then received a lump sum payment of the accrued benefit amounts at the end of their program participation. The program ended June 30, 2018.

The number of teacher retirements peaked in South Carolina in 2018 at 1,937. This was an increase of 600 or 45% from the previous year. In 2020, the number of retirements stood at 1,105—one of the lowest levels in the last eight years.

The number of retirements in Greenville County Schools was at its highest in 2018 and 2019 at 130 . This was more than double the number in recent prior years. For 2020 the number of teacher retirements declined to 93.

Open Positions and Vacancies

Statewide for 2020-21, the number of open teaching positions was down while the number of these positions not filled (vacant) was up.

The number of open teaching positions in South Carolina for the 2020-21 school year, dropped for a second year in a row after increasing dramatically over the previous six years (see chart below). The number of total open positions (in full-time equivalents-FTEs) decreased from 7,265 in the previous year to 6,812—a reduction of 6%.

As stated above, in prior years the number of open teaching positions in South Carolina rapidly increased. The 6,812 open teaching positions in 2020-21 is a 13% increase from 2012-13.

Of the open positions in 2020-21, 699 or 10.3% were not filled (vacant) as of the fall of the school year. This percentage is well above the 7.7% figure for the previous year and is more than double the percentage in 2012-13.

At the start of 2020-21 school year there were 50,730 teaching positions (FTEs) in public schools in the state. Of this number, 13% had been open, and as of the fall semester, just over 1% were still vacant.

For the 2020-21 school year, Greenville County Schools had 466 open teaching positions (FTEs)—a decrease of 84 positions from the previous year but a 17% increase from eight years earlier. Start-of-the-school-year vacant positions numbered 7—a decrease of 4 from the previous year and less than a third of the number (25) in 2014-15.

At the start of 2020-21, the school district had a total of 4,788 teacher positions (FTEs). Of this number 10% had been open positions. *("South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Report" and survey submissions from Greenville County Schools, Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA)).*

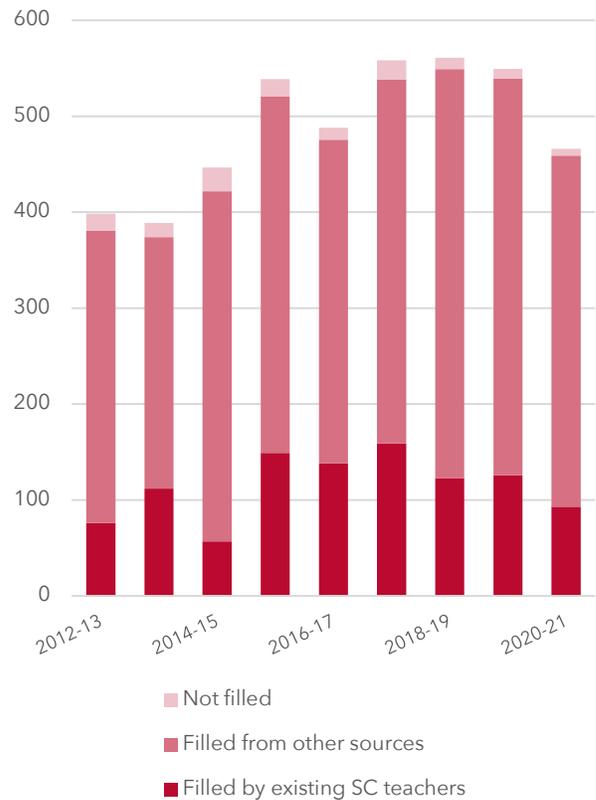## Open Teaching Positions, South Carolina Public Schools

School Years 2012-13 through 2020-21

Legend:
- Not filled
- Filled from other sources
- Filled by existing SC teachers
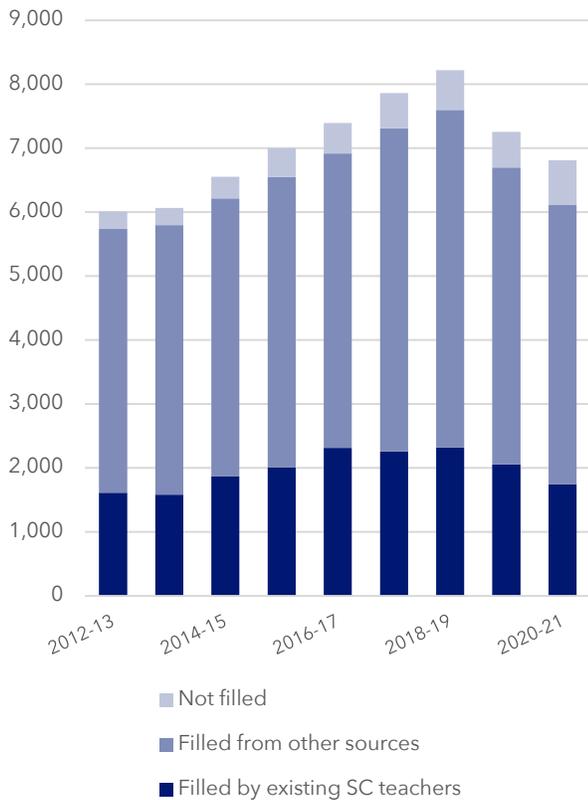
Source: Tables 3C & 5, South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Reports, Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA). (https://www.cerra.org/research.html)

Open Teaching Positions, Greenville County Schools

School Years 2012-13 through 2020-21

Legend:
- Not filled
- Filled from other sources
- Filled by existing SC teachers

Source: Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA). (https://www.cerra.org/research.html)

informedsc.org
Informing Influencers. Advancing Public Schools.

A project of
Public Education Partners
Greenville County

SUPPLY FACTORS
DECREASING AVAILABILITY

Sources for Filling Open Positions

Of the 6,812 open teaching positions in state public schools in 2020-21, 90% were filled and 10% were vacant in the fall of the school year. Of the filled positions, 29% were filled by teachers moving from one school district to another. Just under one-fourth (24%) were filled by students graduating from a teacher education program at a South Carolina public or independent college or university. In Greenville County Schools 20% moved from another district and 18% were in-state graduates.

Sources for Filling Open Teaching Positions (*Excluding those filled by existing SC teachers*)
School Year 2020-21

Source	South Carolina	Greenville County Schools
In-state teacher education program graduates	34.1%	22.4%
Teachers from other states	20.9%	25.1%
Alternative teacher certificate programs	15.2%	16.9%
Out-of-state teacher education program graduates	11.4%	3.8%
Previous substitute or non-teacher in district	6.6%	3.3%
Inactive in-state teacher returning to teaching	5.9%	4.1%
Teachers from a college or private K-12 school in state	1.8%	4.1%
International visiting teacher	1.4%	0%
Online teacher education program graduate	1.3%	0.8%
Private contractual service	1.3%	0%
Other*	0.0%	19.4%

*Greenville County Schools reported "information not given by candidate" as the source for 71 hires.
Source: Table 3C, "South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Report," Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA), December 2020 (https://www.cerra.org/research.html) and survey submissions to CERRA from Greenville County Schools.

When positions filled by existing South Carolina teachers are excluded, 34% of the remaining positions in the state were filled with students just graduated from a public or independent South Carolina teacher education program. This is down from 45% six years earlier. The percentage for Greenville County Schools in 2020-21 was 22%, a large drop from 66% in 2014-15.
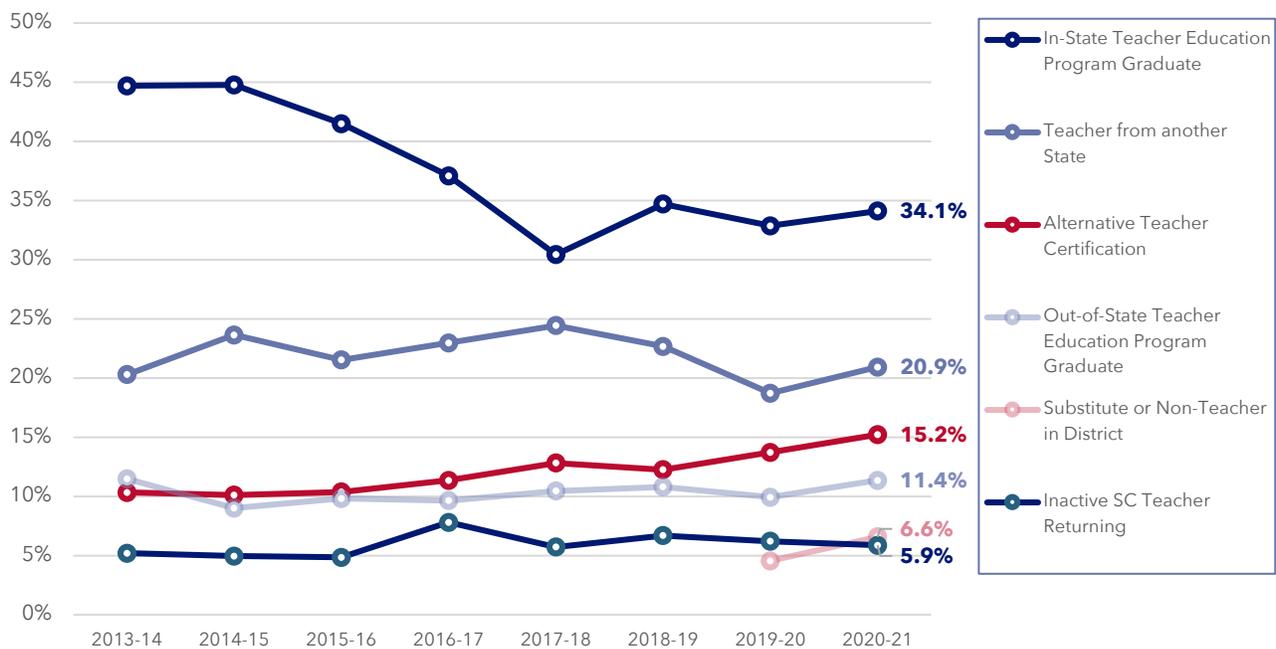
Again, with existing South Carolina teachers excluded, the second largest source for filling open teaching positions in South Carolina public schools was teachers from other states at 21%. For Greenville County Schools, teachers from other states was the largest source for filling teacher positions at 25%. The district has been recruiting at or above this level from this source since 2015-16.

Alternative teacher certificate programs were also significant contributors of 2020-21 hired teachers for both Greenville County Schools and public schools in the state.

informedsc.org
Informing Influencers. Advancing Public Schools.

A project of
Public Education Partners
Greenville County

Top Sources for Filling Open Teaching Positions in SC Districts
(*Excluding those filled by existing SC Teachers*)
School Years 2013-14 through 2020-21

Legend:
- In-State Teacher Education Program Graduate
- Teacher from another State
- Alternative Teacher Certification
- Out-of-State Teacher Education Program Graduate
- Substitute or Non-Teacher in District
- Inactive SC Teacher Returning

Data labels (2020-21): 34.1%, 20.9%, 15.2%, 11.4%, 6.6%, 5.9%
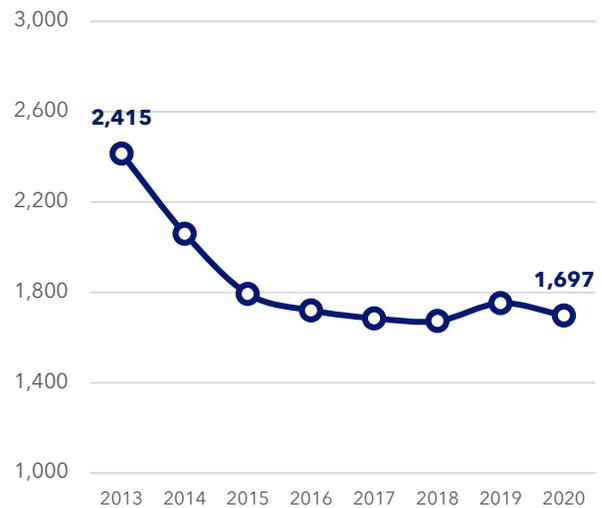
Source: Table 3B, South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Reports, Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA). (https://www.cerra.org/research.html)

Number of In-State Bachelor's Degree Graduates Eligible for Teacher Certification

As displayed in the chart above, the percentage of open positions filled by bachelor's degree graduates of in-state teacher education programs (at public and independent institutions) has declined greatly from where it was six or seven years ago. Corresponding to that, as shown in the chart to the right, the number of in-state graduates with a bachelor's degree eligible for teacher certification declined significantly from over 2,400 in 2013 to around 1,700 in recent years—a 30% decrease from 2013 to 2020.

SC Students Graduating with a Bachelor's Degree Eligible for Teacher Certification
*2013 through 2020*

Data labels: 2,415 (2013), 1,697 (2020)

Source: Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA). (https://www.cerra.org/research.html)

informedsc.org
Informing Influencers. Advancing Public Schools.

A project of
Public Education Partners
Greenville County

As a percentage of the total number of bachelor's degrees awarded in the state, in-state teacher education program graduates accounted for more than 10% of the total in 2013. For the last three years of available data, this figure has been below 7% dropping to 6.4% in 2018.

SC Teacher Program Bachelor's Graduates as a Percentage of All In-State Bachelor's Degrees
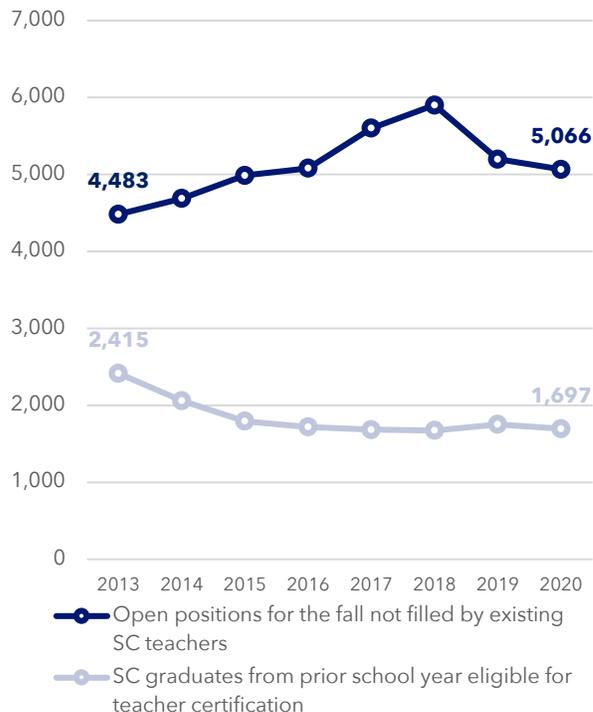*2013 through 2018*
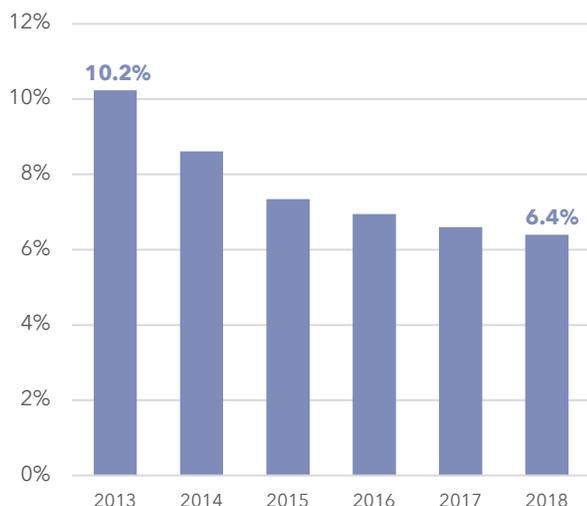
Sources: Center for Educator, Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA); SC Commission on Higher Education. (http://www.che.sc.gov/DataPublications.aspx)

Open teaching positions in South Carolina not filled by existing South Carolina teachers vs. in-state teacher program bachelor's degree graduates
2013 through 2020

Open positions for the fall not filled by existing SC teachers

SC graduates from prior school year eligible for teacher certification

Source: Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA). (https://www.cerra.org/research.html)

Over the last two years, the gap between open teaching positions not filled by existing South Carolina teachers and the number of in-state teacher program bachelor's degree graduates available to fill those positions has shrunk. This is mainly due to a decrease in open positions as the number of graduates has stayed basically static. However, as shown in the chart, the current gap is much worse than in 2013. Overall, from 2013 to 2020, the number of open teaching positions increased by 13% while the number of graduates decreased by 30%.

THE SHORTAGE
HARDEST TO FILL POSITIONS

Hardest to Fill Positions

Nationally the hardest to fill teaching positions are in special education, math and science, English as a second language and English. *(Carver-Thomas, D. & Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute)*
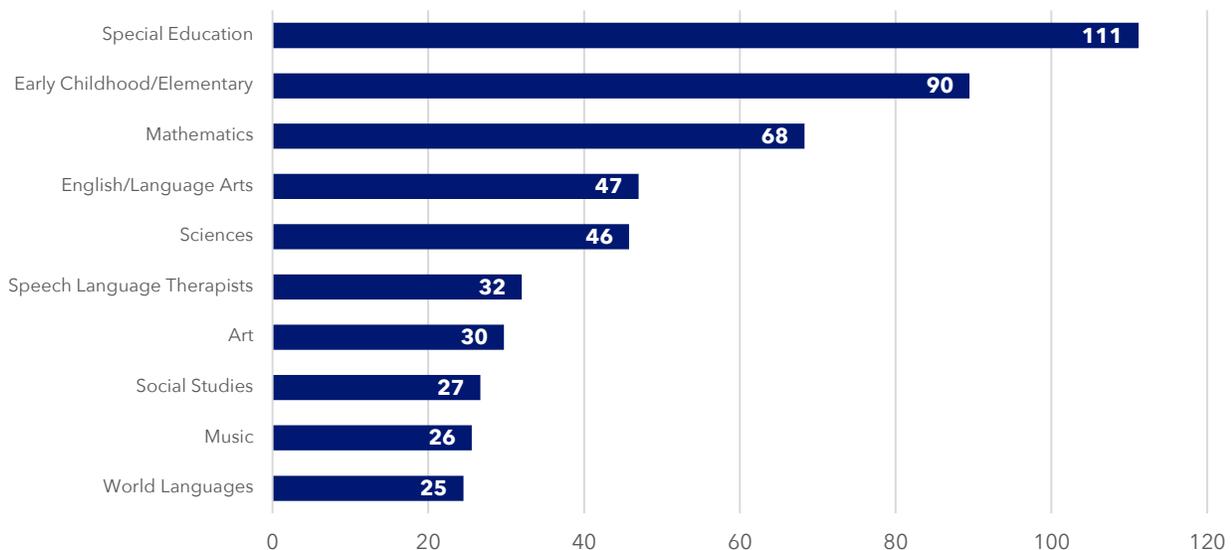
Over the three-year period 2018-19 to 2020-21, South Carolina public schools averaged 625 vacant positions at the start of each school year. The five subject areas with the most vacancies were special education, early childhood/elementary, math, English/language arts and the sciences. On average, there were 111 special education teaching vacancies a year in South Carolina public schools, 90 in early childhood/elementary, 68 in math, 47 in English/language arts and 46 in the sciences.

Over the same three-year period, Greenville County Schools averaged 10 vacant teaching positions at the start of each school year. There were, on average, 2 vacant positions in special education and 1 in each of six areas: mathematics, the sciences, early childhood/elementary, English as a second language, English/language arts and guidance. *(Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement)*

Vacant Teaching Positions Per Year: Top Ten Subjects
South Carolina Public Schools
Annual Average Number, School Years 2018-19 through 2020-21

Subject	Number
Special Education	111
Early Childhood/Elementary	90
Mathematics	68
English/Language Arts	47
Sciences	46
Speech Language Therapists	32
Art	30
Social Studies	27
Music	26
World Languages	25

Source: Table 5, South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Reports, Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA). (https://www.cerra.org/research.html)

informedsc.org
Informing Influencers. Advancing Public Schools.

A project of
Public Education Partners
Greenville County