

TEACHER SALARIES

TEACHER COMPENSATION

HOW DO WE PAY OUR TEACHERS?

State Minimum Teacher Salaries

Minimum salaries for teachers are set by the state and are based upon education level and number of years of teaching experience. Minimum salary increases are also set by the state: annual increases (step increases) for each additional year of teaching experience and increases for completion of an advanced degree. Salaries are composed of two parts: the base amount and the Education Improvement Act (EIA) salary supplement. The total salary is the sum of these two amounts.

The [state minimum salary schedule](#) goes up to 23 years of teaching experience. Under the state budget continuing resolution for FY2020-21, the state salary schedule currently remains the same as the previous year.

Table 1 compares South Carolina's state minimum salaries with those of other southeast states for 2020-21. It shows that South Carolina ranks 6th out of 9 southeast states for the minimum salary for a first-year teacher with a bachelor's degree. It ranks 5th out of 9 Southeast states for a teacher with ten years of experience and a master's degree. See Table A in the Appendix for additional information on state minimum salaries for southeast states.

Table 2 compares 2019-20 state average salaries for southeast states. In this comparison South Carolina ranks 6th out of 12 states and is just above the combined average of the other 11 states.

Greenville County Schools Teacher Salaries

Like most other school districts, our district pays teachers above the state minimums to try to keep teacher pay competitive with area school districts—both in-state and out-of-state. The salaries in [Greenville County Schools' teacher salary schedule](#) are made up of three parts: the state base amount and EIA supplement plus a local supplement.

The FY2020-21 salary schedule for the district is the same as the previous year's but now covers up to 32 years of teaching experience. For teachers with experience beyond the salary schedule, it has been the practice of the school district, as approved by the Board of Trustees, to give these teachers salary increases whenever step increases are given to those within the salary schedule.

Table 1: State Minimum Teacher Salaries, South Carolina and other Southeast States*

First Year with Bachelor's Degree and with Ten Years of Experience with Master's Degree, 2020–2021

| Rank | State | First Year with Bachelor's | Rank | State | 10 Years Experience w/Master's |
|----------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Alabama | \$40,873 | 1 | Alabama | \$54,688 |
| 2 | Georgia | \$37,092 | 2 | Georgia | \$52,396 |
| 3 | West Virginia** | \$36,815 | 3 | North Carolina | \$49,500 |
| 4 | Tennessee | \$36,000 | 4 | West Virginia** | \$45,748 |
| 5 | Mississippi | \$35,890 | 5 | South Carolina | \$45,707 |
| 6 | North Carolina | \$35,000 | 6 | Mississippi | \$43,560 |
| 6 | South Carolina | \$35,000 | 7 | Arkansas | \$43,450 |
| 8 | Arkansas | \$33,800 | 8 | Tennessee | \$43,365 |
| 9 | Kentucky | \$29,804 | 9 | Kentucky | \$40,900 |
| | Average of 8 other states | \$35,659 | | Average of 8 other states | \$46,701 |

Notes: *School districts can pay more than the state minimum salaries. Florida, Louisiana and Virginia do not have teacher salary schedules. **Includes the state minimum salary and the equity supplement amount; not all districts receive the equity supplement. Sources: "South Carolina State Minimum Salary Schedule," South Carolina Dept. of Education. (online: <https://ed.sc.gov/finance/financial-data/historical-data/teacher-salary-schedules/>); for other states, see Appendix.

Table 2: Average Teacher Salaries, Southeast States and Greenville County

2019–2020

| Rank | State | Average Salary |
|----------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Virginia | \$60,265 |
| 2 | Georgia | \$59,062 |
| 3 | North Carolina | \$54,682 |
| 4 | Kentucky | \$54,372 |
| 5 | Alabama | \$54,278 |
| | Greenville County Schools | \$54,066 |
| 6 | South Carolina | \$53,329 |
| | Southeast (11 other states) | \$53,213 |
| 7 | Tennessee | \$52,068 |
| 8 | Louisiana | \$51,243 |
| 9 | Arkansas | \$51,200 |
| 10 | Florida | \$51,092 |
| 11 | West Virginia | \$50,238 |
| 12 | Mississippi | \$46,843 |

Sources: "Southeastern Teacher Salary Average," South Carolina Revenue & Fiscal Affairs Office. (online: <https://rfa.sc.gov/teacher-salary-projections>). SC School Report Card, Greenville County Schools. (online: <https://screportcards.com/>)

Table 2 on this page and the two on the next include Greenville County Schools' salaries in their comparisons. Table 3 ranks its salaries for various levels of teaching experience and professional education among the 79 regular school districts in the state. Table 4 compares Greenville County School salaries against those of school districts in metropolitan areas that the Greenville Chamber of Commerce considers "target" metros. See Table B in the Appendix for more of these comparisons.

National Board Certification Supplement

State fiscal year 2017-18 was the final year for teachers to apply for National Board certification and be eligible to receive an annual salary supplement from the state upon achieving certification. Teachers with existing certification will continue to receive the supplement for the remaining time of their certificate.

Those who entered the program prior to July 1, 2010 will continue to receive an annual salary supplement

from the state of \$7,500 for the remaining period of their certification. Those who initially applied to the program after that date will continue to receive an

annual salary supplement of \$5,000 for the remaining time of their certificate.

Table 3: Greenville County Salaries versus Highest and Median School Districts in the State
Of 79 South Carolina School Districts, 2019–2020 (File of district salary schedules not available for 2020-21.)

| Experience | District Highest Salary | Greenville County Schools | | | District Median Salary |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|------------------|------------------------|
| | | Salary | % of Highest | State Rank | |
| 1st-year with Bachelor's Degree | \$40,295 | \$40,013 | 99.3% | 5 th | \$37,800 |
| 5 years experience | | | | | |
| with Bachelor's Degree | \$43,381 | \$40,898 | 94.3% | 13 th | \$39,486 |
| with Master's Degree | \$48,822 | \$46,925 | 96.1% | 9 th | \$45,058 |
| 10 years experience | | | | | |
| with Bachelor's Degree | \$47,865 | \$45,914 | 95.9% | 10 th | \$44,266 |
| with Master's Degree | \$53,854 | \$52,340 | 97.2% | 8 th | \$50,278 |
| 20 years experience | | | | | |
| with Bachelor's Degree | \$57,350 | \$56,444 | 98.4% | 3 rd | \$52,887 |
| with Master's Degree | \$64,717 | \$63,911 | 98.8% | 3 rd | \$59,720 |

Source: "Fiscal Year 2019-20 District Minimum Teacher Salary Schedules," SC Dept. of Education. (online: <https://ed.sc.gov/finance/financial-data/historical-data/teacher-salary-schedules/>). Note: 1st-year teacher salary for Greenville County Schools includes 4 additional paid days as found at <https://sites.google.com/greenvilleschools.us/employees/resources/payroll/salaries-and-pay-schedules>.

Table 4: Teacher Salaries, School Districts in "Target" Metros and Greenville County Schools
First Year with Bachelor's Degree and with Ten Years of Experience with Master's Degree, 2020–2021

| Rank | Metro School Districts | First Year with Bachelor's | Rank | Metro School Districts | 10 Years Experience w/Master's |
|----------|--|----------------------------|----------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Austin, TX ² | \$51,000 | 1 | Montgomery Co., MD ¹ | \$78,407 |
| 2 | Montgomery Co., MD ¹ | \$50,503 | 2 | Denver, CO | \$67,429 |
| 3 | Denver, CO | \$46,133 | 3 | Wake County, NC ⁴ | \$57,973 |
| 4 | Nashville, TN ³ | \$45,965 | 4 | Chattanooga, TN ³ | \$55,513 |
| 5 | Oklahoma City, OK ⁵ | \$41,500 | 5 | Austin, TX ² | \$54,479 |
| 6 | Wake County, NC ⁴ | \$41,275 | 6 | Greenville County, SC⁶ | \$51,229 |
| 7 | Chattanooga, TN ³ | \$41,051 | 7 | Nashville, TN ³ | \$50,223 |
| 8 | Greenville County, SC⁶ | \$40,013 | 8 | Oklahoma City, OK ⁵ | \$47,900 |

¹Ten-month annual salary; Montgomery County, MD is a suburb of Washington, D.C. ²10-month salary; Does not include \$6,000 stipend for bilingual teachers and \$2,000 stipend for special education teachers. ³201-day annual salary. ⁴Wake County, NC is the county containing Raleigh, NC. ⁵181-day annual salary. ⁶190-day annual salary; 1st-year teacher salary for Greenville County Schools includes 4 additional paid days. Sources: "Greenville County Schools Teacher Salary Schedule," Greenville County Schools. (online: <https://sites.google.com/greenvilleschools.us/employees/resources/payroll/salaries-and-pay-schedules>); for other metro school districts, see "Sources" in Appendix.

Loan Forgiveness Programs and other Financial Incentives

Salary supplements provided by some school districts in the state include signing bonuses and stipends for teacher mentors.

At the state level the SC Teachers Loan Program provides for loan forgiveness for teaching in a critical subject or critical geographic area. A loan is forgiven at the rate of 20% or \$3,000, whichever is greater, for each full year of teaching in a South Carolina public school in a critical subject or critical geographic area. For those teaching in both a critical subject and a critical geographic area, their loan is forgiven at the rate of 33 1/3% or \$5,000, whichever is greater, for each year of full-time teaching. (*South Carolina Student Loan, Teacher Loan Program*)

Additionally, the [Rural Teacher Recruitment Incentive program](#) is offered to school districts with an average teacher turnover rate above 11% for the last five years and which are not among the fifteen wealthiest schools districts in the state. Funded by the state and administered by the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement, this program provides various financial incentives for teaching in an eligible school district. This includes specific student loan forgiveness opportunities beyond what is available in the SC Teachers Loan Program as well as salary supplements for teacher mentors. Other types of incentives are possible. (*2019-20 South Carolina state appropriations bill, proviso 1A.54*)

Thirty-four of thirty-five eligible school districts participated in the Rural Teacher Recruitment Incentive program in 2019-20. Twenty-nine of these reported fewer teachers leaving and/or fewer vacant teaching positions compared to the previous year. In 2020-21 forty-three districts were eligible for the program. (*"South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Report," Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA), December 2020*)

Teacher Salaries for Those Receiving Retirement Benefits

A change in the allowed salary for teachers receiving retirement benefits occurred in 2018. Initiated in 2000 to keep experienced teachers in the classroom, the South Carolina Teacher and Employee Retirement Incentive (TERI) program allowed teachers to keep their salary and work up to five years after they officially retire 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. Effective July 1, 2012 the program was closed to new hires, and new enrollees in the program after that date were required to end their participation within five years or by June 30, 2018, whichever was earlier.

With the end of TERI, under current state law, annual salaries for teachers receiving retirement benefits are capped at \$10,000 except for those teaching a critical need subject and/or teaching at a critical need school. There is a waiver in place for these teachers.

APPENDIX

Table A: 2020-21 State Minimum Teacher Salaries, South Carolina and Southeast States

| Rank | State | 1 st -year with Bachelor's degree |
|----------|----------------------------|--|
| 1 | Alabama | \$40,873 |
| 2 | Georgia | \$37,092 |
| 3 | West Virginia* | \$36,815 |
| 4 | Tennessee | \$36,000 |
| 5 | Mississippi | \$35,890 |
| 6 | North Carolina | \$35,000 |
| 6 | South Carolina | \$35,000 |
| 8 | Arkansas | \$33,800 |
| 9 | Kentucky | \$29,804 |
| | Avg. 8 other states | \$35,659 |

| Rank | State | 3 years experience w/ Bach. degree |
|----------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Alabama | \$44,956 |
| 2 | West Virginia* | \$38,578 |
| 3 | Georgia | \$38,115 |
| 4 | North Carolina | \$38,000 |
| 5 | Tennessee | \$36,645 |
| 6 | Mississippi | \$36,385 |
| 7 | South Carolina | \$35,462 |
| 8 | Arkansas | \$35,150 |
| 9 | Kentucky | \$29,804 |
| | Avg. 8 other states | \$37,204 |

| Rank | State | 5 years experience w/ Master's degree |
|----------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Alabama | \$51,699 |
| 2 | Georgia | \$45,841 |
| 3 | North Carolina | \$44,000 |
| 4 | West Virginia* | \$42,809 |
| 5 | South Carolina | \$40,962 |
| 6 | Arkansas | \$40,950 |
| 7 | Mississippi | \$40,260 |
| 8 | Tennessee | \$39,605 |
| 9 | Kentucky | \$36,558 |
| | Avg. 8 other states | \$42,715 |

| Rank | State | 10 years experience w/ Master's degree |
|----------|----------------------------|--|
| 1 | Alabama | \$54,688 |
| 2 | Georgia | \$52,396 |
| 3 | North Carolina | \$49,500 |
| 4 | West Virginia* | \$45,748 |
| 5 | South Carolina | \$45,707 |
| 6 | Mississippi | \$43,560 |
| 7 | Arkansas | \$43,450 |
| 8 | Tennessee | \$43,365 |
| 9 | Kentucky | \$40,900 |
| | Avg. 8 other states | \$46,701 |

| Rank | State | 20 years experience w/ Master's degree |
|----------|----------------------------|--|
| 1 | Georgia | \$60,263 |
| 2 | Alabama | \$57,685 |
| 3 | North Carolina | \$55,000 |
| 4 | South Carolina | \$53,935 |
| 5 | West Virginia* | \$52,223 |
| 6 | Mississippi | \$50,160 |
| 7 | Tennessee | \$47,380 |
| 8 | Arkansas | \$45,950 |
| 9 | Kentucky | \$42,828 |
| | Avg. 8 other states | \$51,436 |

*Includes the state minimum salary, the equity supplement amount and the \$600 salary supplement for those with at least 20 years of teaching experience. Sources: "South Carolina State Minimum Salary Schedule," South Carolina Dept. of Education. (online: <https://ed.sc.gov/finance/financial-data/historical-data/teacher-salary-schedules/>); for other states, see "Sources" in Appendix.

Table B: 2020-21 Teacher Salaries, Greenville County Schools and School Systems of “Target” Metropolitan Areas

| Rank | Metro School Dist. | 1 st -year with Bachelor’s degree |
|----------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Austin, TX ² | \$51,000 |
| 2 | Montgomery Co. MD ¹ | \$50,503 |
| 3 | Denver, CO | \$46,133 |
| 4 | Nashville, TN ³ | \$45,965 |
| 5 | Oklahoma City, OK ⁵ | \$41,500 |
| 6 | Wake County, NC ⁴ | \$41,275 |
| 7 | Chattanooga, TN ³ | \$41,051 |
| 8 | Greenville Co., SC⁶ | \$40,013 |

| Rank | Metro School Dist. | 3 years experience w/ Bach. degree |
|----------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Montgomery Co. MD ¹ | \$54,329 |
| 2 | Austin, TX ² | \$51,866 |
| 3 | Denver, CO | \$50,331 |
| 4 | Nashville, TN ³ | \$46,402 |
| 5 | Wake County, NC ⁴ | \$44,516 |
| 6 | Oklahoma City, OK ⁵ | \$42,400 |
| 7 | Chattanooga, TN ³ | \$42,281 |
| 8 | Greenville Co., SC⁶ | \$40,028 |

| Rank | Metro School Dist. | 5 years experience w/ Master’s degree |
|----------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Montgomery Co. MD ¹ | \$64,997 |
| 2 | Denver, CO | \$59,053 |
| 3 | Austin, TX ² | \$53,431 |
| 4 | Wake County, NC ⁴ | \$51,682 |
| 5 | Chattanooga, TN ³ | \$49,770 |
| 6 | Nashville, TN ³ | \$48,585 |
| 7 | Greenville Co., SC⁶ | \$46,569 |
| 8 | Oklahoma City, OK ⁵ | \$44,400 |

| Rank | Metro School Dist. | 10 years experience w/ Master’s degree |
|----------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Montgomery Co MD ¹ | \$78,407 |
| 2 | Denver, CO | \$67,429 |
| 3 | Wake County, NC ⁴ | \$57,973 |
| 4 | Chattanooga, TN ³ | \$55,513 |
| 5 | Austin, TX ² | \$54,479 |
| 6 | Greenville Co., SC⁶ | \$51,229 |
| 7 | Nashville, TN ³ | \$50,223 |
| 8 | Oklahoma City, OK ⁵ | \$47,900 |

| Rank | Metro School Dist. | 20 years experience w/ Master’s degree |
|----------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Montgomery Co. MD ¹ | \$101,656 |
| 2 | Denver, CO | \$82,507 |
| 3 | Wake County, NC ⁴ | \$65,608 |
| 4 | Nashville, TN ³ | \$65,399 |
| 5 | Chattanooga, TN ³ | \$63,556 |
| 6 | Greenville Co., SC⁶ | \$62,729 |
| 7 | Oklahoma City, OK ⁵ | \$60,200 |
| 8 | Austin, TX ² | \$56,834 |

¹Ten-month annual salary; Montgomery County, MD is a suburb of Washington, D.C. ²187-day annual salary; Does not include \$3,500 stipend for bilingual teachers and \$1,500 stipend for special education teachers. ³201-day annual salary. ⁴Wake County, NC is the county containing Raleigh, NC. ⁵181-day annual salary. ⁶190-day annual salary; 1st-year teacher salary for Greenville County Schools includes 4 additional paid days. Sources: "Greenville County Schools Teacher Salary Schedule," Greenville County Schools. (online: <https://sites.google.com/greenvilleschools.us/employees/resources/payroll/salaries-and-pay-schedules>); for other metro school districts, see "Sources" in Appendix.

Table 1 & Table A Sources - Other States

Alabama: "FY 2021 Foundation Program, State Minimum Salary Schedule, Classroom Teachers," Alabama State Dept. of Education. (online: <https://www.alsde.edu/sec/leafa/Pages/home.aspx>)

Arkansas: Arkansas Code, Title 6 Education, Section 6-17-2403. (online: <http://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/divisions/legal/legal-links>).

Georgia: "State Salary Schedule," Georgia Dept. of Education. (online: <http://www.gadoe.org/Finance-and-Business-Operations/Budget-Services/Pages/default.aspx>).

Kentucky: "Kentucky's Historical Minimum Salary Schedule," Kentucky Dept. of Education. (online: <https://education.ky.gov/districts/FinRept/Pages/School%20District%20Personnel%20Information.aspx>).

Mississippi: "FY2020-21 MAEP Salary Schedule," Mississippi Dept. of Education. (online: <https://www.mdek12.org/OSF/TeacherSalarySchedule>).

North Carolina: "Fiscal Year 2020-21 North Carolina Public School Salary Schedules," North Carolina Dept. of Public Instruction. (online: <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/district-operations/financial-and-business-services/compensation-public-school-employees>).

Tennessee: "State Salary Schedule, Licensed Instructional Personnel," Tennessee Dept. of Education.

West Virginia: "Teachers' State Minimum Salary Schedule, State Total Salary (Basic plus Equity)," West Virginia Dept. of Education. (online: <https://wvde.us/finance-and-administration/school-finance/data/>).

Table 4 & Table B Sources - Other Metropolitan School Districts

Austin, TX: (Austin Independent School District): "Austin ISD 2020-21 New Hire Guide for Teachers/Librarians," Austin Independent School District. (online: <https://www.austinisd.org/hr/current-employees>).

Chattanooga, TN (Hamilton County Schools): "2020-2021 Hamilton County Schools Certified Salary Scale," Hamilton County Schools. (online: https://www.hcde.org/search_results?q=certified%20salary%20scale%20steps).

Denver, CO (Denver Public Schools): "Denver Public Schools Teacher and SSP Step and Grade Schedule 2020-2021," Denver Public Schools. (online: <https://hr.dpsk12.org/employee-associations/>).

Montgomery Co., MD (Montgomery County Public Schools): "Teacher & Other Professional Salary Schedule," Montgomery County Public Schools. (online: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/ersc/employees/pay/schedules/salary-teachers.aspx>).

Nashville, TN (Metro Nashville Public Schools): "Certificated Employee Salary Schedule, 10 Month Employees - 201 Days" Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools. (online: <https://www.mnps.org/salary-schedules/>).

Oklahoma City, OK (Oklahoma City Public Schools): "Oklahoma City Public Schools - FY21 Teacher Salary Schedule," p. 50 of "Collective Bargaining Agreement 2020-2021." (online: <https://www.okcps.org/Domain/110>).

Wake County, NC (Wake County Public School System): "Teacher/Certified Staff Salary Schedules," Wake County Public School System. (online: <https://www.wcps.net/salaries>).