

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.
- End of the state TERI program

In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic is currently impacting the demand for teachers.

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

This fact sheet covers these demand and supply issues as well as the sources for filling teaching positions and the subject areas with the highest teacher vacancies. The primary sources are the “South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Report” documents published by the Center for

Factors Increasing the Demand for Teachers

- Increasing student enrollment
- Higher teacher turnover
- Lower pupil-teacher ratios
- End of the state TERI program
- Covid-19 pandemic

Factor Decreasing the Supply of Teachers

- Drop in teacher education program graduates

Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA). For information on teacher salaries, see the “Teacher Salaries” fact sheet.

DEMAND FACTORS

THE NEED FOR MORE TEACHERS

Student Enrollment Growth

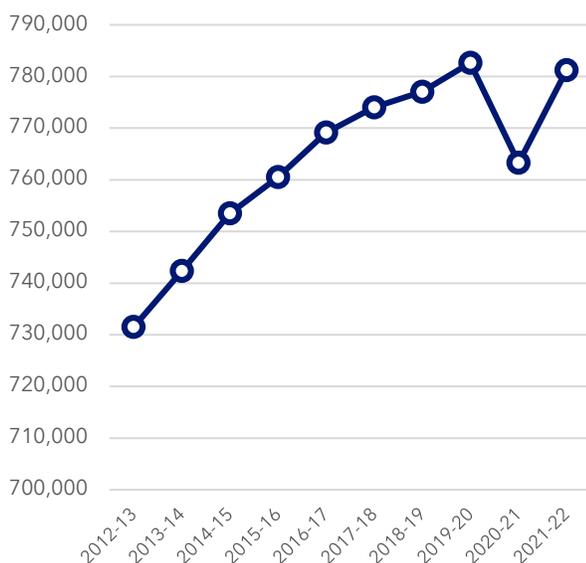
Before a decrease due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, student enrollment in the state grew rapidly resulting in the need for more teachers. Over the seven-year period (2012-13 to 2019-20), total public-school enrollment in the state (including charter school districts) increased at an average, annual rate of 1% with an average of 7,300 additional students per year.

Greenville County Schools' enrollment decreased 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.

The school-age population is projected to continue to grow strongly in both Greenville County and the state albeit at a somewhat slower pace.

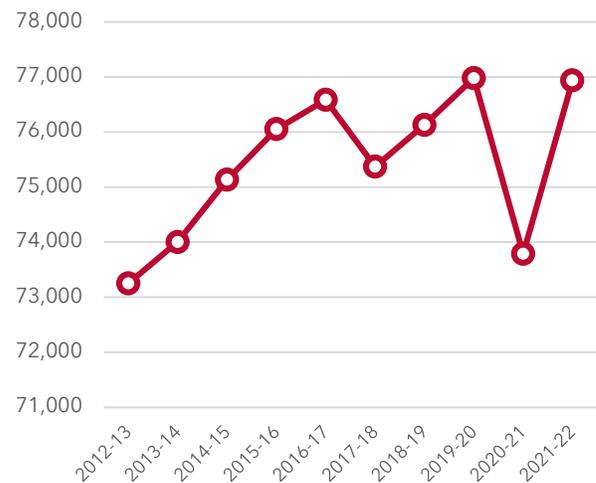
Student Enrollment, South Carolina Public Schools*

School Years 2012-13 through 2021-22



Student Enrollment, Greenville County Schools

School Years 2012-13 through 2021-22



* State data Includes special schools and charter school districts.

Source: 45-Day (2021-22) and 135-Day Active Headcount, South Carolina Dept. of Education. (<https://ed.sc.gov/data/other/student-counts/active-student-headcounts/>)

Higher Teacher Turnover

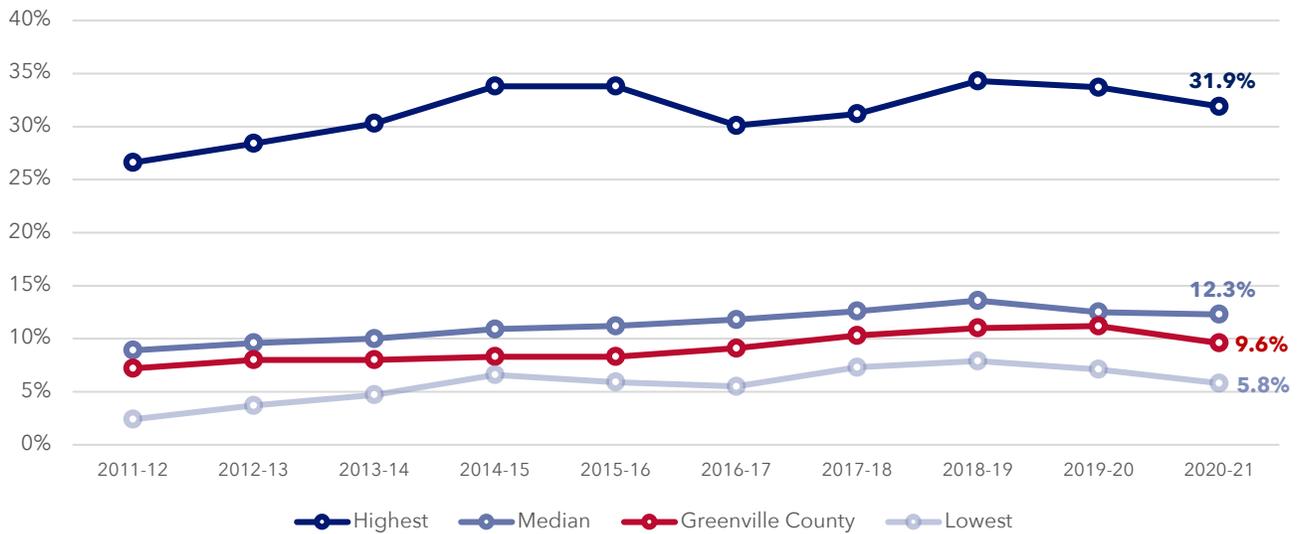
Another factor affecting the teacher shortage is increasing teacher turnover.

As shown in the chart on the next page, over the last ten years the median turnover rate among school districts in the state (three-year average annual rate) increased from 9% to around 13%. Over the last three years, 12 of 78 reporting districts (15%) consistently had teacher turnover rates at or above 20% with the highest rates above 30%.

Greenville County Schools' 3-year average rate increased from 7% in 2011-12 to just above 11% in 2019-20 before falling to 10% in the most recent year

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

School Years 2011-12 through 2020-21



Source: Source: SC School Report Card. (online: <https://screportcards.com>).

when it had the 17th lowest rate among the 78 districts.

In the first full school year of the Covid-19 pandemic (2020-21), turnover rates dropped in 75% of state school districts. (*SC School Report Card*). However, the number of open teaching positions at the start of the next school year (see next page) increased greatly.

Another statewide concern is the number of teachers who leave after their first year of teaching. Of the first-year teachers hired for the 2020-21 school year, 30% did not return to a position in the same district the next year.

Of the first-year teachers hired for the 2020-21 school year, 30% did not return to a position in the same district in 2021-22.

Of the teachers who left their positions during or at the end of 2020-21, 35% had five or fewer years of classroom experience in South Carolina and 12% had one year or less.

Each year the South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, & Advancement (CERRA) collects educator supply and demand data from school districts including the reasons why teachers in the state leave their current teaching position. The data, however, is not very useful due to the large number of “no reason given” responses provided by many school districts and the small number of “internal reason (school climate, administration, additional non-instructional duties, salary, etc.)” responses in reports for both the state and Greenville County Schools.

Data on retirements, though, would appear to be useful. In 2021-22, of teacher departures with a reason given, retirements accounted for 25% of those departures in state public school districts. Of all teacher departures, Greenville County Schools recorded the same 25% rate.

Departures due to Covid-19 were not shown as a major factor at either the state level and for the school district. (*“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 succeeding 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.

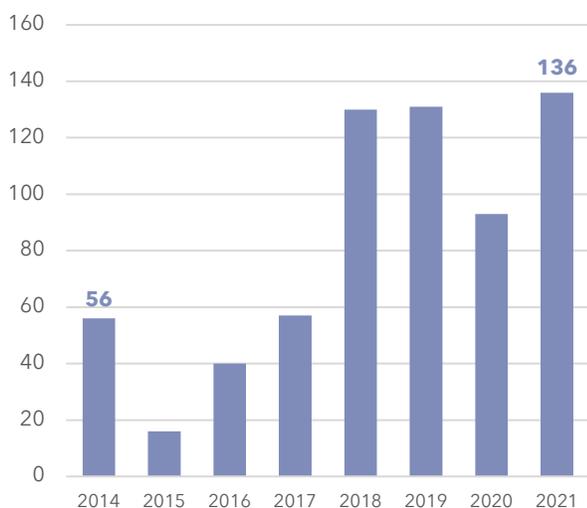
End of the State TERI Program

The end of the state TERI program in 2018 contributed to a rise in the number of teacher retirements.

Initiated in 2000 to keep experienced teachers in the classroom, the TERI program (SC Teacher and Employee Retirement Incentive) 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. As stated above, the program no longer exists.

Number of Teacher Retirements, Greenville County Schools

2014 through 2021



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

Across public schools in South Carolina, teacher retirements increased by 45% the year the program ended and then returned to previous levels. In Greenville County Schools the number remained higher (see chart). The average number of teacher retirements each year from 2018-19 through 2021-22 was nearly three times higher than for the previous four years (123 per year vs. 43 per year).

Covid-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has had apparent effects on the teacher shortage. Large increases have occurred in both the number of unfilled (vacant) teaching positions and out-of-field teachers (teachers who are teaching one or more courses or classes in a subject for which they do not have the appropriate certification).

Over two years, from 2019 (before the pandemic began) to 2021, the September percentage of vacant teaching positions in Greenville County Schools (GCS) more than doubled (2% to 5%) and across all public schools in the state, increased by 70% (8% to 13%). The 1,063 vacant positions in South Carolina public schools at the start of the 2021-22 school year is the highest recorded. (*“South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Report” and survey submission by Greenville County Schools, CERRA*)

In the first full school year of the pandemic (2020-21) the number of out-of-field teachers in Greenville County Schools more than doubled (12 to 33) from the previous year and increased by 60% (445 to 714) across all public schools in the state. (*SC School Report Card*).

Open Positions and Vacancies

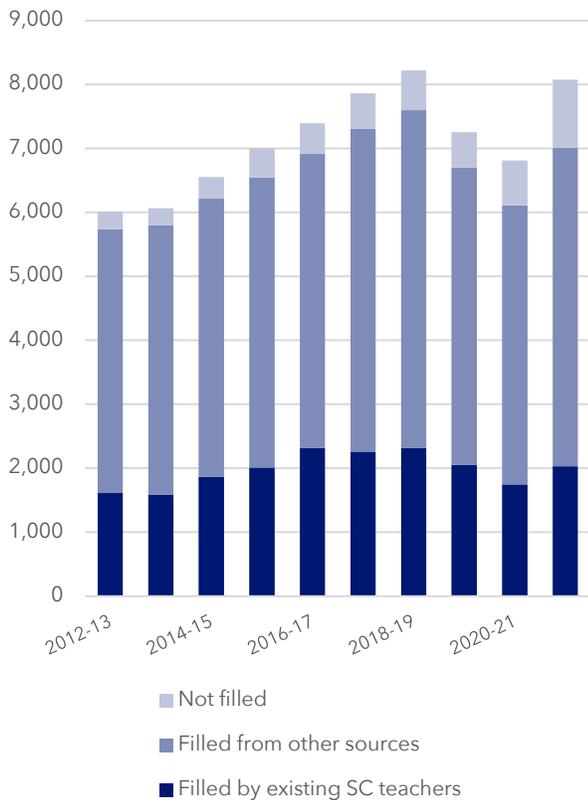
The number of open teaching positions in 2021-22 greatly increased from the previous year as did the number of unfilled (vacant) teaching positions as described above.

In South Carolina public schools the number of open positions in this most recent year increased by nearly 20% (by 1,250 positions in full-time equivalents-FTEs) from the previous year. As stated above, the number of those unfilled in September set a record

of 1,063 vacant positions, which is more than double the number five years earlier. Except for the 2019-20 school year, the number of unfilled positions in the state increased every year for the past eight years.

At the start of 2021-22 school year there were 56,170 educators (teacher and service* FTEs) in public schools in the state. Of this number, 14% had been open for the fall semester and 2% were still vacant in September.

**Open Teaching Positions,
South Carolina Public Schools**
School Years 2012-13 through 2021-22

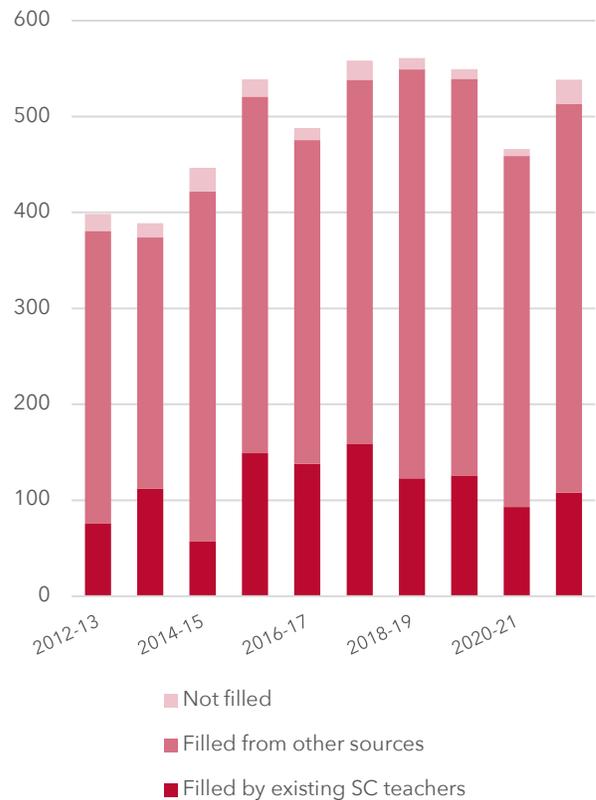


Source: Tables 3C, 4A & 4B; South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Reports, Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA). (<https://www.cerra.org/research.html>)

For the 2021-22 school year, Greenville County Schools had 540 open teaching positions (FTEs)—an increase of over 70 from the previous year. Start-of-the-school-year vacant positions increased from 7 to 26.

At the start of 2021-22, the school district had a total of 5,420 educator FTEs. Of this number, 10% had been open positions. (*“South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Report” and survey submissions from Greenville County Schools, CERRA*).

**Open Teaching Positions,
Greenville County Schools**
School Years 2012-13 through 2021-22



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

*Educator service positions include librarians, counselors, psychologists and speech language pathologists.

SUPPLY FACTORS

DECREASING AVAILABILITY

Sources for Filling Open Positions

Of the 8,080 open teaching positions in state public schools in 2020-21, 87% were filled and 13% 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. Another 22% were filled by students graduating from a teacher education program at a South Carolina public or independent college or university. In Greenville County Schools 21% moved from another district and 17% were in-state graduates.

Sources for Filling Open Teaching Positions (Excluding those filled by existing SC teachers)

School Year 2021-22

Source	South Carolina	Greenville County Schools
In-state teacher education program graduates	31.5%	22.0%
Teachers from other states	21.8%	35.3%
Alternative teacher certificate programs	15.9%	20.5%
Out-of-state teacher education program graduates	9.0%	6.2%
International visiting teacher	6.1%	2.2%
Previous substitute or non-teacher in district	6.1%	3.5%
Inactive in-state teacher returning to teaching	3.8%	2.5%
Private contractual service	1.9%	0%
Teachers from a college or private K-12 school in state	1.8%	2.7%
Online teacher education program graduate	1.4%	0.5%
Other	0.7%	4.7%

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, 32% 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% seven years earlier. The percentage for Greenville County Schools in 2021-22 was 22%, a large drop from 66% in 2014-15.

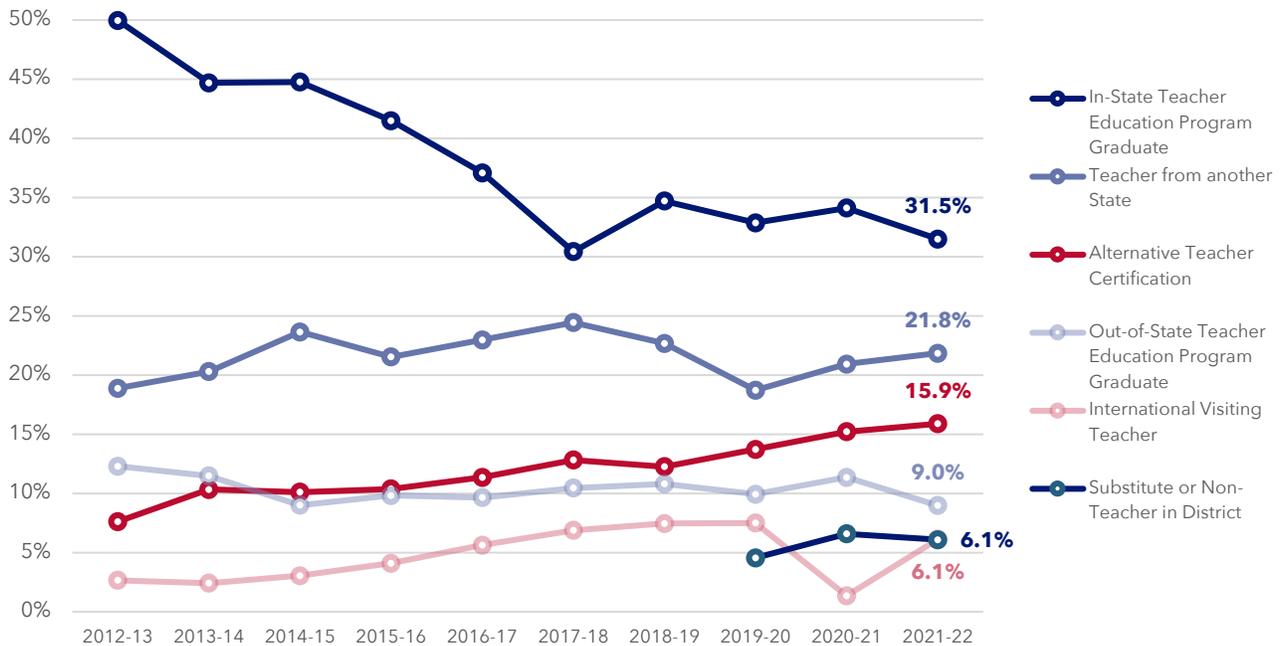
Again, with existing South Carolina teachers excluded, the second largest source for filling open teaching positions in South Carolina public schools was teachers from other states at 22%, a

percentage that has stayed fairly consistent over the last ten years. For Greenville County Schools, teachers from other states was the largest source for filling teacher positions at 35%. This is a big jump from the previous four-year average of 26%.

Alternative teacher certificate programs were also significant contributors of 2021-22 hired teachers for both Greenville County Schools and public schools in the state. The school district percentage (21%) is nearly five times what it was ten years earlier.

Top Sources for Filling Open Teaching Positions in SC Districts (Excluding those filled by existing SC Teachers)

School Years 2013-14 through 2021-22

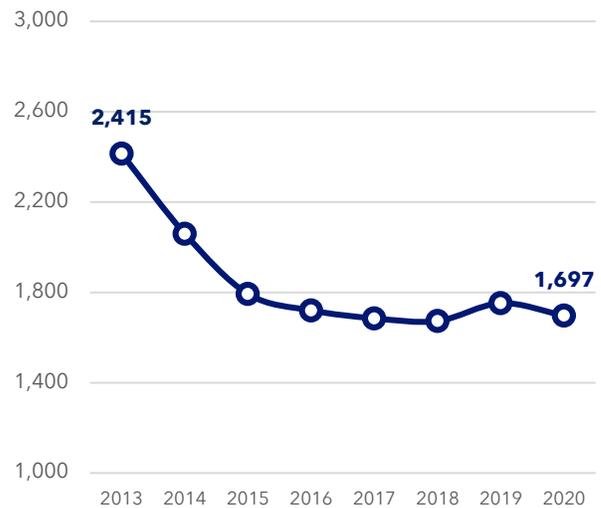


Source: Table 3C; South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Reports, Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA). (<https://www.cerra.org/research.html>)

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 graduates of in-state teacher education programs (at public and independent institutions) has declined greatly from where it was seven or eight years ago. Corresponding to that, as shown in the chart to the right, the number of in-state bachelor's degree graduates 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

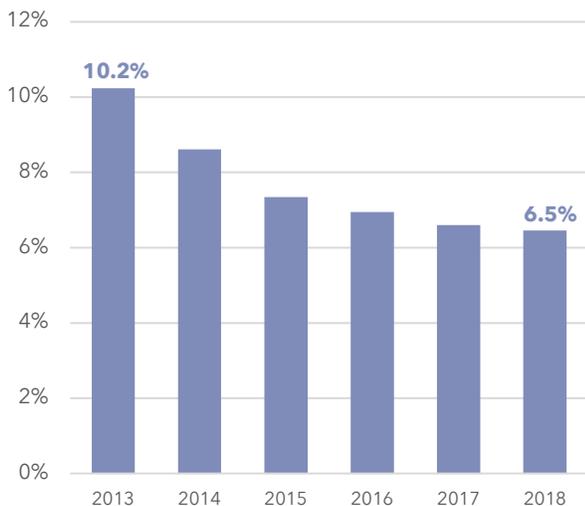


Source: Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA). (<https://www.cerra.org/research.html>)

As a percentage of the total number of bachelor's degrees awarded in the state, in-state bachelor's degree graduates eligible for teacher certification 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 6.5% in 2018.

SC Teacher Program Bachelor's Graduates as a Percentage of All In-State Bachelor's Degrees

2013 through 2018

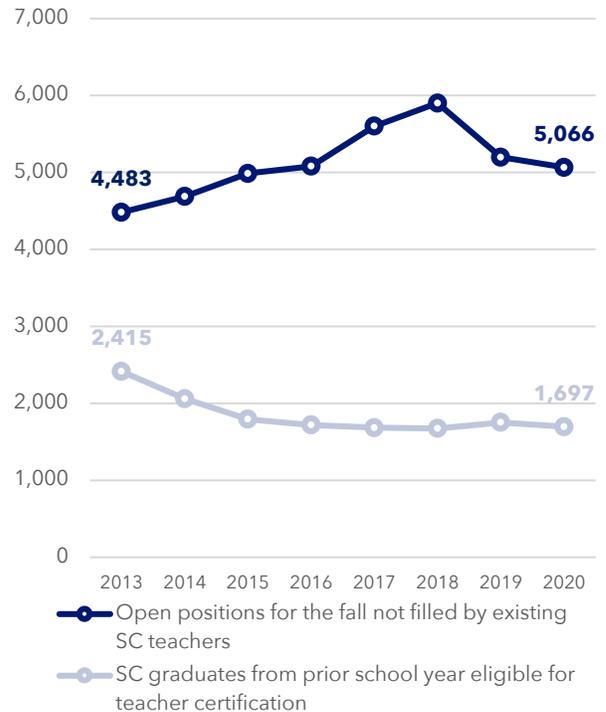


Sources: Center for Educator, Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA); SC Commission on Higher Education. (<http://www.che.sc.gov/DataPublications.aspx>)

Over the last two years of available data, 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 the decrease in open positions in the two school years prior to 2021-22 and a generally static number of graduates. However, as shown in the chart, the recent 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%.

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



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

THE SHORTAGE HARDEST TO FILL POSITIONS

Hardest to Fill Positions

Nationally the hardest to fill teaching positions are in special education, math, 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)*

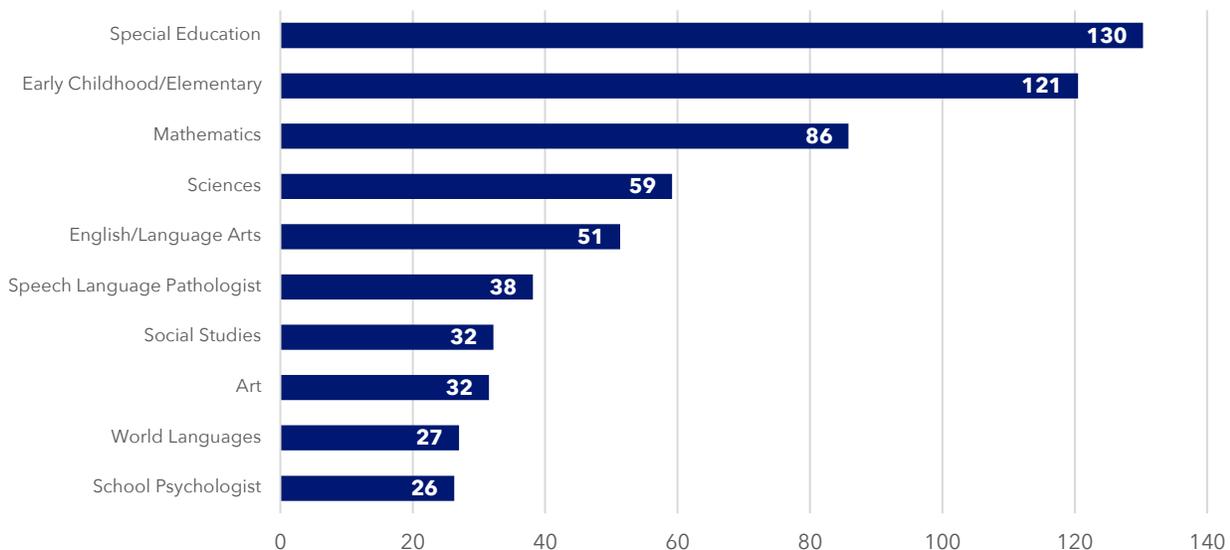
While there were 1,063 vacant positions in South Carolina public schools at the start of the 2021-22 school year, the average number over the most recent three-year period was 770. The five subject areas with the most vacancies for this period were special education, early childhood/elementary,

math, the sciences and English/language arts. On average, there were 130 special education teaching vacancies a year in South Carolina public schools, 121 in early childhood/elementary, 86 in math, 59 in the sciences and 51 in English/language arts.

Over the same three-year period, Greenville County Schools averaged 14 vacant teaching positions at the start of each school year including 26 in 2021-22. There were, on average, 4 vacant positions in special education and 2 each in early childhood/elementary and mathematics. In addition, there was one unfilled position in the sciences each year. *(Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement)*

Vacant Teaching Positions Per Year: Top Ten Subjects South Carolina Public Schools

Annual Average Number, School Years 2019-20 through 2021-22



Source: Tables 4A & 4B; South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Reports, Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA). (<https://www.cerra.org/research.html>)