

# TEACHER SALARIES

## TEACHER COMPENSATION

## HOW DO WE PAY OUR TEACHERS?

### State Minimum Teacher Salaries

Minimum salaries for teachers in South Carolina are set by the state and based upon education level (bachelor's, master's, etc.) and number of years of teaching experience. Annual salaries increase for each additional year of teaching experience (step increases) up to a certain number of years and for attainment of additional education levels. State minimum salaries are the sum of two parts: the base amount and the Education Improvement Act (EIA) salary supplement.

The [state minimum teacher salary schedule](#) for 2021-22 goes up to 23 years of teaching experience. Salaries for each step, including for first-year teachers, increased by \$1,000 from the previous year.

Table 1 compares South Carolina's state minimum salaries with those of other southeast states for 2021-22. 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 4th 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 2020-21 state average salaries for southeast states. In this comparison South Carolina ranks 6th out of 12 states and is just below 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 FY2021-22 salary schedule for the district now covers up to 33 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 Ten Years of Experience with Master's Degree, 2021–2022

Rank	State	First Year with Bachelor's	Rank	State	10 Years Experience w/Master's
1	Alabama <sup>1</sup>	\$41,690	1	Alabama <sup>1</sup>	\$56,144
2	Tennessee	\$38,000	2	Georgia	\$52,396
3	Georgia	\$37,092	3	North Carolina	\$48,400
4	Mississippi	\$37,000	<b>4</b>	<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>\$46,707</b>
5	West Virginia <sup>2</sup>	\$36,815	5	West Virginia <sup>2</sup>	\$45,748
<b>6</b>	<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>\$36,000</b>	6	Tennessee	\$45,365
7	North Carolina	\$35,000	7	Mississippi	\$44,560
8	Arkansas	\$34,900	8	Arkansas	\$44,550
9	Kentucky	\$29,804	9	Kentucky	\$40,900
	<b>Average of 8 other states</b>	<b>\$36,288</b>		<b>Average 8 other states</b>	<b>\$47,258</b>

Notes: \*School districts can pay more than the state minimum salaries. Florida, Louisiana and Virginia do not have teacher salary schedules. <sup>1</sup>187-day annual salary; Math and science teachers work a 189-day school year and receive an increasing salary supplement for each year of teaching beginning additional pay of \$5,000 in year one and nearly \$19,000 after 20 years of experience. <sup>2</sup>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**

2020–2021

Rank	State	Average Salary
1	Georgia	\$60,543
2	Virginia	\$60,137
	<b>Greenville Co.</b>	<b>\$54,595</b>
<b>3</b>	Kentucky	\$54,548
4	North Carolina	\$54,392
5	Alabama	\$53,633
	Southeast (11 other states)	\$53,367
<b>6</b>	<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>\$53,185</b>
7	Tennessee	\$52,596
8	Louisiana	\$51,566
9	Arkansas	\$51,336
10	Florida	\$51,167
11	West Virginia	\$50,261
12	Mississippi	\$46,862

Sources: Southeastern Average Teacher Salary Survey, South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office (online: <https://rfa.sc.gov/teacher-salary-projections/>); South Carolina Teacher Salary Information, Average Teacher Salary by District, CERRA (online: <https://www.cerra.org/research.html>).

Table 2 on this page and the two on the next provide Greenville County Schools' salary comparisons. Table 3 ranks its salaries for various levels of teaching experience and professional education among the 77 regular school districts in the state. It should be noted that in all categories except for the first-year teacher, the highest salary is in Charleston County public schools—a county with a higher cost of living than Greenville. Table 4 compares Greenville County School salaries against metropolitan school districts in the South that have a cost-of-living index at or below that of Greenville. See Table B in the Appendix for more of these comparisons.

## National Board Certification Supplement

In South Carolina, the annual salary supplement for National Board Certified teachers is set for the next fiscal year in every state budget. For 2021-22, those who entered the program prior to July 1, 2010 will continue to receive an annual salary supplement from the state of \$7,500. In a change from the previous three years, all those who initially applied to the program after that date will receive an annual salary supplement of \$5,000 not to exceed the

length of one national board certificate cycle. (*South Carolina Dept. of Education*).

As of March 2021, twenty-seven other states in the country provided a salary supplement for National

Board Certification including six of the eight other southeast states listed in Table 1. (*National Board for Professional Teaching Standards*)

**Table 3: Greenville County Salaries versus Highest and Median School Districts in the State**

*Of 77 South Carolina School Districts\*, 2021–2022*

Experience	District Highest Salary	Greenville County Schools			District Median Salary
		Salary	% of Highest	State Rank	
1st-year with Bachelor's Degree	\$42,515	\$42,515	100%	1 <sup>st</sup>	\$39,099
5 years experience					
with Bachelor's Degree	\$45,782	\$42,992	94%	7 <sup>th</sup>	\$40,855
with Master's Degree	\$51,391	\$49,062	96%	5 <sup>th</sup>	\$46,158
10 years experience					
with Bachelor's Degree	\$50,403	\$46,925	93%	12 <sup>th</sup>	\$45,288
with Master's Degree	\$56,590	\$53,352	94%	11 <sup>th</sup>	\$51,378
20 years experience					
with Bachelor's Degree	\$60,192	\$57,498	96%	6 <sup>th</sup>	\$53,997
with Master's Degree	\$67,640	\$65,094	96%	5 <sup>th</sup>	\$61,260

\*Does not include the two charter school districts in the state.

Source: "Fiscal Year 2021-22 District Minimum Teacher Salary Schedules," SC Dept. of Education. (online: <https://ed.sc.gov/finance/financial-data/historical-data/teacher-salary-schedules/>). Note: 1<sup>st</sup>-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, Greenville County Schools and Comparable Out-of-State Districts\***

*First Year with Bachelor's Degree and Ten Years of Experience with Master's Degree, 2021–2022*

Rank	Metro School Districts	First Year with Bachelor's	Rank	Metro School Districts	10 Years Experience w/Master's
1	Baton Rouge, LA <sup>1</sup>	\$46,300	1	Mobile, AL	\$60,648
2	Mobile, AL <sup>2</sup>	\$45,034	2	Chattanooga, TN	\$56,629
3	Little Rock, AR <sup>3</sup>	\$43,000	3	Little Rock, AR	\$56,447
<b>4</b>	<b>Greenville County, SC<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>\$42,515</b>	4	Greensboro, NC	\$54,500
5	Chattanooga, TN <sup>5</sup>	\$41,876	5	Knoxville, TN	\$53,536
6	Oklahoma City, OK <sup>6</sup>	\$41,500	<b>6</b>	<b>Greenville County, SC</b>	<b>\$53,352</b>
7	Knoxville, TN <sup>7</sup>	\$41,420	7	Baton Rouge, LA	\$52,000
8	Greensboro, NC <sup>8</sup>	\$41,100	8	Oklahoma City, OK	\$47,900

\*School districts in metropolitan areas in the South with a cost-of-living index at or below that of Greenville (source: *AdvisorSmith*).

<sup>1</sup>East Baton Rouge Parish Public Schools, 182-day annual salary; <sup>2</sup>Mobile County Public Schools, 202-day annual salary; <sup>3</sup>Little Rock School District, 190-day annual salary; <sup>4</sup>Greenville County Schools, 190-day annual salary (1<sup>st</sup>-year salary includes four additional paid days); <sup>5</sup>Hamilton County Dept. of Education, 201-day annual salary; <sup>6</sup>Oklahoma City Public Schools, 181-day annual salary; <sup>7</sup>Knox County Schools, 200-day annual salary; <sup>8</sup>Guilford County Schools, 10-month salary. Sources: "Greenville County Schools Teacher Salary Schedule," (online: <https://sites.google.com/greenvilleschools.us/employees/resources/payroll/salaries-and-pay-schedules/>); for all others 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.

For teachers with a South Carolina Teachers Loan, Career Changers Loan or PACE Program Loan, the state provides 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 either a critical subject or critical geographic area. For those teaching in both, 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, SC Teacher Loan Programs & Forgiveness*)

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. (*2021-22 South Carolina state appropriations bill, proviso 1A.51*)

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. (*"Rural Teacher Recruitment and Retention Incentives, Legislative Report, July 2021," Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA)*)

## Teacher Salaries for Those Receiving Retirement Benefits

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, South Carolina has temporarily changed state law on the maximum, annual amount retired teachers can earn upon returning to the classroom.

Under a legislative joint resolution signed into law in April 2021, retired teachers in South Carolina who return to teaching may now earn up to \$50,000 annually and maintain their full retirement benefits. This is a significant increase from the existing state cap of \$10,000.

Again, this change is temporary. Under the 2021 law, the higher level of earnings is limited to thirty-six consecutive months of employment.

In all cases under state law, there is no earnings limit while retaining full retirement benefits for retirees teaching a critical need subject and/or at a critical need school as set by the State Board of Education. (*Act 102 enacted by the South Carolina General Assembly in 2021; South Carolina Code of Laws, Sections 9-1-1790 and 9-1-1795*)

## Teacher Take-Home Pay

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) "Teacher Compensation Dashboard" provides "typical teacher take-home pay" (net salaries) for southern states in 2019 and 2020.

Using 2020 data for the 12 southeast states in Table 2, South Carolina's typical take-home pay for first-year teachers ranks 10<sup>th</sup> and is \$1,800 *below* the average of the eleven other states. For those in their 15<sup>th</sup> year of teaching, the state ranks 5<sup>th</sup> and is \$750 *above* the average.

SREB's take-home pay calculations are based on what a "typical" first- and fifteenth-year teacher brings home in their paycheck after deducting their required retirement contribution, their health insurance premium costs, and taxes. (*SREB Teacher Compensation Dashboard*)

## APPENDIX

**Table A: 2021-22 State Minimum Teacher Salaries, South Carolina and Southeast States**

Rank	State	1 <sup>st</sup> -year with Bachelor's degree
1	Alabama <sup>1</sup>	\$41,690
2	Tennessee	\$38,000
3	Georgia	\$37,092
4	Mississippi	\$37,000
5	West Virginia <sup>2</sup>	\$36,815
<b>6</b>	<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>\$36,000</b>
7	North Carolina	\$35,000
8	Arkansas	\$34,900
9	Kentucky	\$29,804
	<b>Avg. 8 other states</b>	<b>\$36,288</b>

Rank	State	3 years experience w/ Bach. degree
1	Alabama <sup>1</sup>	\$45,855
2	Tennessee	\$38,645
3	West Virginia <sup>2</sup>	\$38,578
4	Georgia	\$38,115
5	Mississippi	\$37,385
6	North Carolina	\$37,000
<b>7</b>	<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>\$36,462</b>
8	Arkansas	\$36,250
9	Kentucky	\$29,804
	<b>Avg. 8 other states</b>	<b>\$37,704</b>

Rank	State	5 years experience w/ Master's degree
1	Alabama <sup>1</sup>	\$52,733
2	Georgia	\$45,841
3	North Carolina	\$42,900
4	West Virginia <sup>2</sup>	\$42,809
5	Arkansas	\$42,050
<b>6</b>	<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>\$41,962</b>
7	Tennessee	\$41,605
8	Mississippi	\$41,260
9	Kentucky	\$36,558
	<b>Avg. 8 other states</b>	<b>\$43,220</b>

Rank	State	10 years experience w/ Master's degree
1	Alabama <sup>1</sup>	\$56,144
2	Georgia	\$52,396
3	North Carolina	\$48,400
<b>4</b>	<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>\$46,707</b>
5	West Virginia <sup>2</sup>	\$45,748
6	Tennessee	\$45,365
7	Mississippi	\$44,560
8	Arkansas	\$44,550
9	Kentucky	\$40,900
	<b>Avg. 8 other states</b>	<b>\$47,258</b>

Rank	State	20 years experience w/ Master's degree
1	Georgia	\$60,263
2	Alabama <sup>1</sup>	\$59,580
3	North Carolina	\$55,000
<b>4</b>	<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>\$54,935</b>
5	West Virginia <sup>2</sup>	\$52,223
6	Mississippi	\$51,160
7	Tennessee	\$49,380
8	Arkansas	\$47,050
9	Kentucky	\$42,828
	<b>Avg. 8 other states</b>	<b>\$52,186</b>

<sup>1</sup>187-day annual salary; Math and science teachers work a 189-day school year and receive an increasing salary supplement for each year of teaching beginning additional pay of \$5,000 in year one and nearly \$19,000 after 20 years of experience. <sup>2</sup>State total salary: Basic plus State Supplement and includes \$600 salary supplement for teachers 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. NOTE: Seven states (Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and West Virginia) provide higher salaries for those with National Board Certification. See *NBPTS state table for more information*.

**Table B: 2021-22 Teacher Salaries, Greenville County Schools and Comparable Out-of-State Districts\***

Rank	Metro School Dist.	1 <sup>st</sup> -year with Bachelor's degree
1	Baton Rouge, LA <sup>1</sup>	\$46,300
2	Mobile, AL <sup>2</sup>	\$45,034
3	Little Rock, AR <sup>3</sup>	\$43,000
<b>4</b>	<b>Greenville Co. SC<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>\$42,515</b>
5	Chattanooga, TN <sup>5</sup>	\$41,876
6	Oklahoma City, OK <sup>6</sup>	\$41,500
7	Knoxville, TN <sup>7</sup>	\$41,420
8	Greensboro, NC <sup>8</sup>	\$41,100

Rank	Metro School Dist.	3 years experience w/ Bach. degree
1.	Baton Rouge, LA	\$46,975
2.	Little Rock, AR	\$45,632
3.	Mobile, AL	\$45,034
4.	Knoxville, TN	\$44,183
5.	Chattanooga, TN	\$43,131
6.	Greensboro, NC	\$43,100
<b>7.</b>	<b>Greenville Co., SC</b>	<b>\$42,664</b>
8.	Oklahoma City, OK	\$42,400

Rank	Metro School Dist.	5 years experience w/ Master's degree
1.	Mobile, AL	\$56,963
2.	Little Rock, AR	\$51,126
3.	Chattanooga, TN	\$50,770
4.	Baton Rouge, LA	\$49,750
<b>5.</b>	<b>Greenville Co., SC</b>	<b>\$49,062</b>
6.	Greensboro, NC	\$49,000
7.	Knoxville, TN	\$48,438
8.	Oklahoma City, OK	\$44,400

Rank	Metro School Dist.	10 years experience w/ Master's degree
1.	Mobile, AL	\$60,648
2.	Chattanooga, TN	\$56,629
3.	Little Rock, AR	\$56,447
4.	Greensboro, NC	\$54,500
5.	Knoxville, TN	\$53,536
<b>6.</b>	<b>Greenville Co., SC</b>	<b>\$53,352</b>
7.	Baton Rouge, LA	\$52,000
8.	Oklahoma City, OK	\$47,900

Rank	Metro School Dist.	20 years experience w/ Master's degree
1.	Little Rock, AR	\$66,840
<b>2.</b>	<b>Greenville Co., SC</b>	<b>\$65,094</b>
3.	Chattanooga, TN	\$64,833
4.	Knoxville, TN	\$64,576
5.	Mobile, AL	\$64,359
6.	Greensboro, NC	\$61,100
7.	Oklahoma City, OK	\$60,200
8.	Baton Rouge, LA	\$56,500

\*School districts in metropolitan areas in the South with a cost-of-living index at or below that of Greenville (source: *AdvisorSmith*).

<sup>1</sup>East Baton Rouge Parish Public Schools, 182-day annual salary; <sup>2</sup>Mobile County Public Schools, 202-day annual salary; <sup>3</sup>Little Rock School District, 190-day annual salary; <sup>4</sup>Greenville County Schools, 190-day annual salary (1<sup>st</sup>-year salary includes four additional paid days); <sup>5</sup>Hamilton County Dept. of Education, 201-day annual salary; <sup>6</sup>Oklahoma City Public Schools, 181-day annual salary; <sup>7</sup>Knox County Schools, 200-day annual salary; <sup>8</sup>Guilford County Schools, 10-month salary. Sources: "Greenville County Schools Teacher Salary Schedule," (online: <https://sites.google.com/greenvilleschools.us/employees/resources/payroll/salaries-and-pay-schedules>); for all others see "Sources" in Appendix.

## **Table 1 & Table A Sources - Other States**

Alabama: "FY 2022 Teachers Salary Schedule" and "FY 2022 Math and Science Teacher Salary Schedule," Alabama Dept. of Education. (online: <https://www.alabamaachieves.org/>)

Arkansas: Arkansas Code, Title 6 Education, Subtitle 2, Chapter 17, Subchapter 24. (online: <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/>; select "Arkansas Code").

Georgia: "QBE Reports, State Salary Schedule," Georgia Dept. of Education. (online: <https://financeweb.doe.k12.ga.us/QBEPublicWeb/ReportsMenu.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: "Teacher Salary Schedule," Mississippi Dept. of Education. (online: <https://www.mdek12.org/OSF/TeacherSalarySchedule>).

North Carolina: "State 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 State Supplement)," West Virginia Dept. of Education. (online: <https://wvde.us/finance-and-administration/school-finance/data/>).

## **Table 4 & Table B Sources - School Districts in Metro Areas with Comparable Cost of Living**

Baton Rouge, LA (East Baton Rouge Parish School System): "Payroll Information, 2021-22 Salary Schedule" (online: <https://staff.ebrschools.org/divisions/operations/payroll-information/>).

Chattanooga, TN (Hamilton County Dept. of Education): "2021-2022 Certified Salary Scale" (online: [https://www.hcde.org/search\\_results?q=certified%20salary%20scale%20steps](https://www.hcde.org/search_results?q=certified%20salary%20scale%20steps)).

Greensboro, NC (Guilford County Schools): "Teacher and Pupil Support Salary Schedule 2021-22" (online: <https://www.gcsnc.com/site/Default.aspx?PageID=19110>).

Knoxville, TN (Knox County Schools): "2021-2022 Salary Schedules" (online: <https://www.knoxschools.org/Page/16731>).

Little Rock, AR (Little Rock School District): "Certified Pay Scales, Teacher Pay Scale 2021-22" (online: <https://www.lrsd.org/Page/1519>).

Mobile, AL (Mobile County Public Schools): "Compensation and Pay Plan" (online: <https://www.mcpss.com/salarieschedule>).

Oklahoma City, OK (Oklahoma City Public Schools): "Collective Bargaining Agreement, 2021-22, Teachers" (online: <https://www.okcps.org/Page/7307>).