

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. 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 two major demand factors:

- increasing student enrollment, and
- higher teacher turnover

As stated 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 teaching fields with the highest vacancies. The primary source for this data is the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA) through its annual “South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Report” documents. For information on teacher salaries, see the “Teacher Salaries” fact sheet.

Factors Increasing the Demand for Teachers

- Increasing student enrollment
- Higher teacher turnover

Factor Decreasing the Supply of Teachers

- Drop in teacher education program graduates

DEMAND FACTORS

THE NEED FOR MORE TEACHERS

Student Enrollment Growth

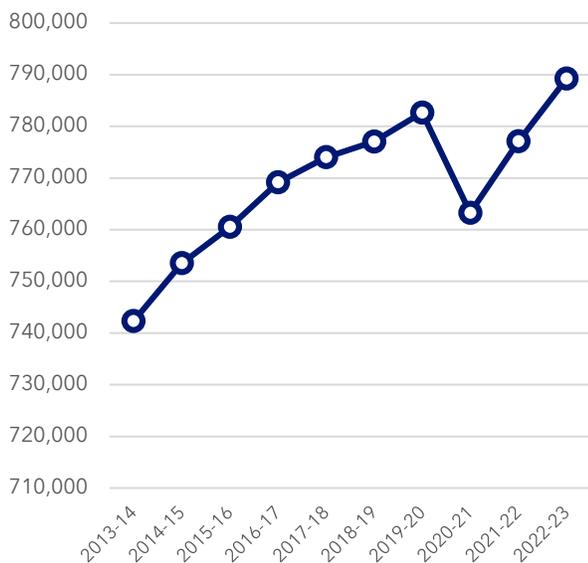
Despite a significant drop due to the COVID-19 pandemic, enrollment in South Carolina public schools continues to grow. Total enrollment (including charter school districts) in 2022-23 is 6% higher than it was nine years previous averaging 5,200 additional students every year.

Two drops in Greenville County Schools' enrollment occurred in the last ten years: one due to charter schools moving to the SC Public Charter School District in 2017-18 and the other due to the pandemic. Despite that, district enrollment is now 5% higher than it was nine years ago averaging 440 additional students every year. *(SC Dept. of Education)*

Through 2030, the school-age population is projected to continue to grow strongly in both Greenville County (a bit faster) and the state (a bit slower). *(SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office).*

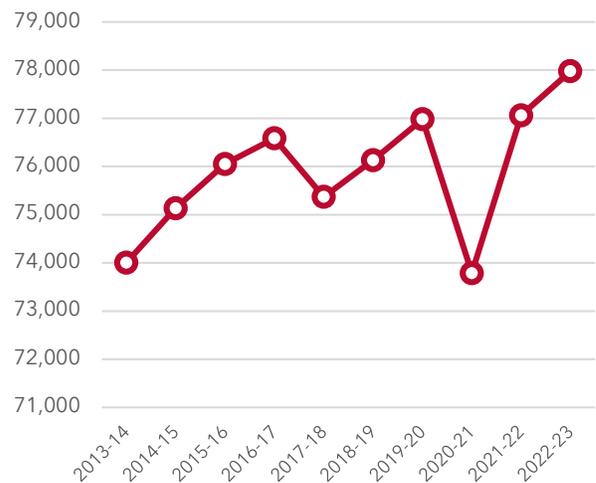
Student Enrollment South Carolina Public Schools*

School Years 2013-14 through 2022-23



Student Enrollment Greenville County Schools

School Years 2013-14 through 2022-23



* State data includes special schools and charter school districts.

Source: 45-Day (2022-23) and 135-Day Active Headcount, South Carolina Dept. of Education. (<https://ed.sc.gov/data/other/student-counts/active-student-headcounts/>)

Higher Teacher Turnover

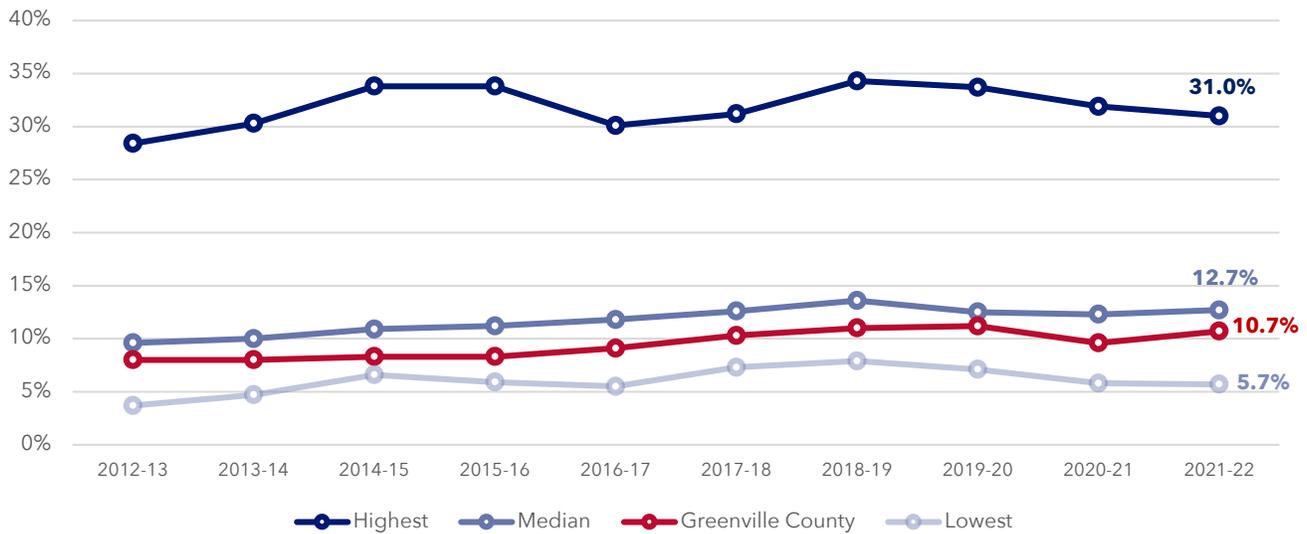
Another factor affecting the teacher shortage is increasing teacher turnover.

As shown in the next chart, in the last nine years the median, annual turnover rate among school districts in the state (three-year, average annual rate) increased from 10% to around 13%. Of the 77 districts in the state in 2021-22, ten consistently have had annual teacher turnover rates at or above 20% with the highest rate above 30%. At 20%, a school district is replacing one in five teachers every year.

Greenville County Schools' three-year, average rate increased from 8% in 2012-13 to nearly 11% nine years later in 2021-22. That year it had the 24th

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

School Years 2012-13 through 2021-22



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

lowest rate among the 77 school districts.

Compared to the previous year, three-year, average annual rates in 2021-22 increased in just over half of the school districts in the state. The rate for Greenville County Schools increased a percentage point from 9.6% to 10.7%

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. As shown in the above chart, teacher turnover, so far, has not been significantly impacted by the pandemic. The state median turnover rate in 2018-19—the school year before the pandemic—was actually higher than it was during, or in the year following, the pandemic. The rate for Greenville County Schools was basically the same before, during and after the pandemic. (*SC School Report Card data*).

Loss of Early-Year Teachers. A critical statewide and local concern is the number of teachers who leave after their first few years of teaching. Over the last five years, on average, one in three first-year teachers in the state leave teaching or move to another school district after one year in the classroom

Statewide, of all teachers who left their positions during or at the end of 2021-22, 12% had one year or less of teaching experience in a public school (anywhere) and 37% had five or fewer years in the

Across the state, 1 in 3 first-year teachers leave teaching or move to another school district after one year in the classroom.

classroom. In Greenville County Schools the rates were higher at 26% and 56%.

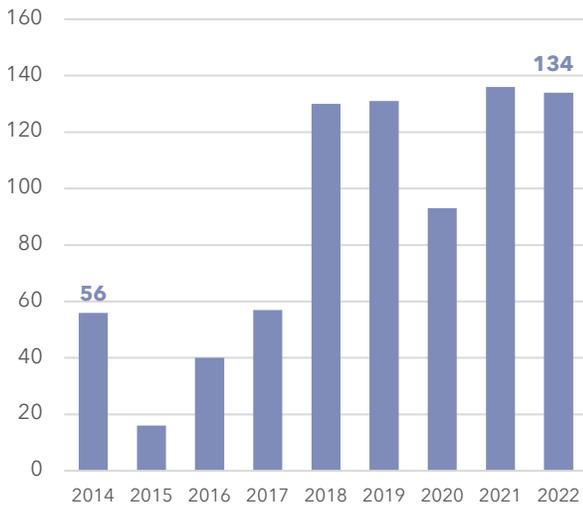
Impact of Teacher Retirements. This same year, retirements accounted for 18% of all teacher departures in state public school districts and 20% in Greenville County Schools.

Four years prior, a large jump in teacher retirements occurred at the end of the 2017-18 school year. This was due to the end of the South Carolina Teacher and Employee Retirement Incentive (TERI) program. This state initiative allowed teachers to work up to five years after they officially retired during which time they could also accrue pension benefits. Retirements that year accounted for 26% of all teacher departures in the state and in Greenville County Schools (GCS).

During both the periods four years before and four years after the TERI-ending year, the percentage of departures due to retirement in the state was around 19%. However, this percentage for GCS increased from 15% before to 22% after. (*“South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Report” and survey submission by Greenville County Schools, Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA)*)

Number of Annual Teacher Retirements, Greenville County Schools

2014 through 2022



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

Open Teaching Positions to Fill

As shown in the charts on the next page, the number of open teaching positions to be filled at the start of a school year increased greatly in the last two years in Greenville County Schools and across South Carolina.

At the start of the 2022-23 school year there were 55,600 teaching positions (in FTEs) in public schools in the state. Of this number, 9,160 (17%) had been open positions and needed to be filled. This number of open positions was a 35% increase from two years prior—an additional 2,350 positions to be filled in full-time equivalents.

At Greenville County Schools, there were 5,500 teaching positions (in FTEs) at the start of the 2022-

23 school year. Of this number, 760 (14%) had been open positions. This number of open positions was a 63% increase from two years prior—an additional 290 positions to fill. (*“South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Report” and survey submissions from Greenville County Schools, CERRA*).

Vacancies & Out-of-Field Teachers

Among these open teaching positions, large increases have occurred in the number of positions that go unfilled (are vacant).

Over a two-year period (2020-21 to 2022-23), the percentage of open teaching positions in Greenville County Schools (GCS) that were unfilled at the start of the school year doubled from 2% to 4% with 28 positions vacant at the start of the 2022-23 school year.

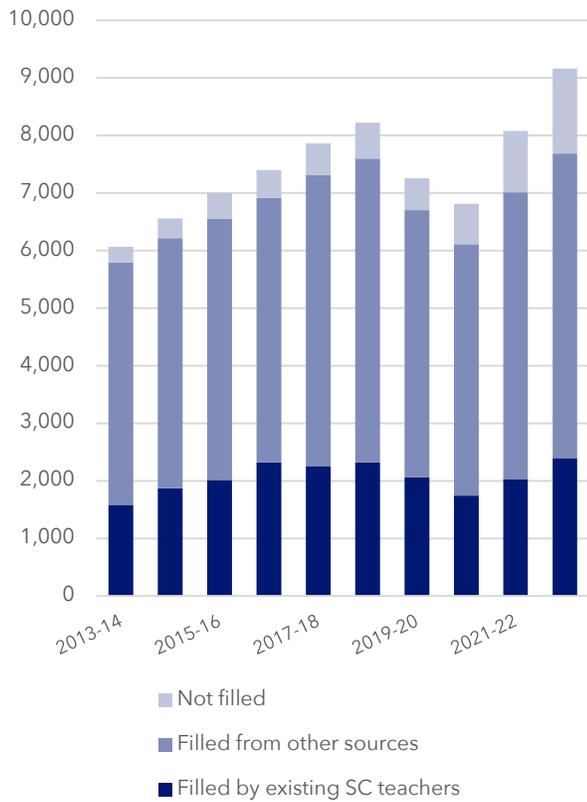
Across all public schools in the state, the percentage increased by 60% (10% to 16%). The 1,470 vacant positions in South Carolina public schools at the start of the 2022-23 school year is the highest recorded and more than double the number two years earlier. (*“South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Report” and survey submission by Greenville County Schools, CERRA*)

An additional concern is the number of positions filled by 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).

In 2021-22, 580 teaching positions in the state (2%) were filled by out-of-field teachers. This is a drop from 710 the previous year. Greenville County Schools had a major reduction in the number of out-of-field teachers. In the 2020-21 school year, the district had 33 positions filled by out-of-field teachers (2%). The number dropped to 3 the next year. (*SC School Report Card*).

Open Teaching Positions* South Carolina Public Schools

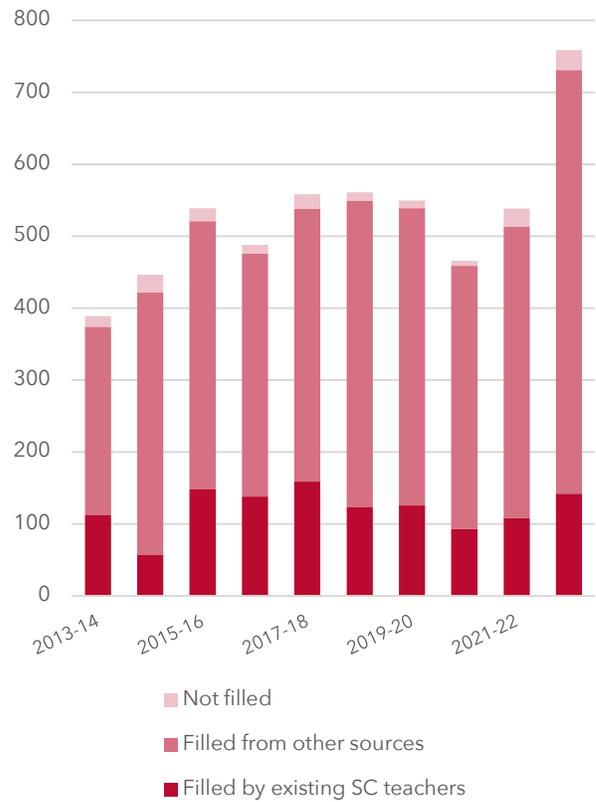
School Years 2013-14 through 2022-23



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>)

Open Teaching Positions* Greenville County Schools

School Years 2013-14 through 2022-23



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

*In addition to those in the classroom, the number of teaching positions includes educator service positions: librarians, counselors, psychologists and speech language pathologists. (CERRA)

SUPPLY FACTOR

DECREASING AVAILABILITY

Sources for Filling Open Positions

Of the filled, open-teaching positions in state public schools in 2022-23, 31% were filled by teachers moving from one school district to another within the state. Another 17% were filled by

students graduating from a teacher education program at a South Carolina public or independent college or university. In Greenville County Schools, 19% moved from another district in the state and 11% were in-state graduates.

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

School Year 2022-23

Source	South Carolina	Greenville County Schools
In-state teacher education program graduates	25%	14%
Teachers from other states	22%	20%
Alternative teacher certificate programs	17%	20%
Out-of-state teacher education program graduates	9%	4%
International visiting teacher	8%	4%
Previous substitute or non-teacher in district	8%	32%
Inactive in-state teacher returning to teaching	4%	4%
Online teacher education program graduate	2%	1%
Teachers from a college or private K-12 school in state	2%	2%
Private contractual service	1%	0%
Other	2%	0%

Source: Tables 3C & 3D, "South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Report," Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA), November 2022 (<https://www.cerra.org/research.html>) and 2022-23 survey submission to CERRA from Greenville County Schools.

As shown in the chart above, when positions filled by existing South Carolina teachers are excluded, 25% of the remaining positions in the state were filled with students just graduated from a public or independent in-state teacher education program. This is down from 45% nine years earlier. The percentage for Greenville County Schools in 2022-23 was 14%, a large drop from 56% in 2013-14.

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

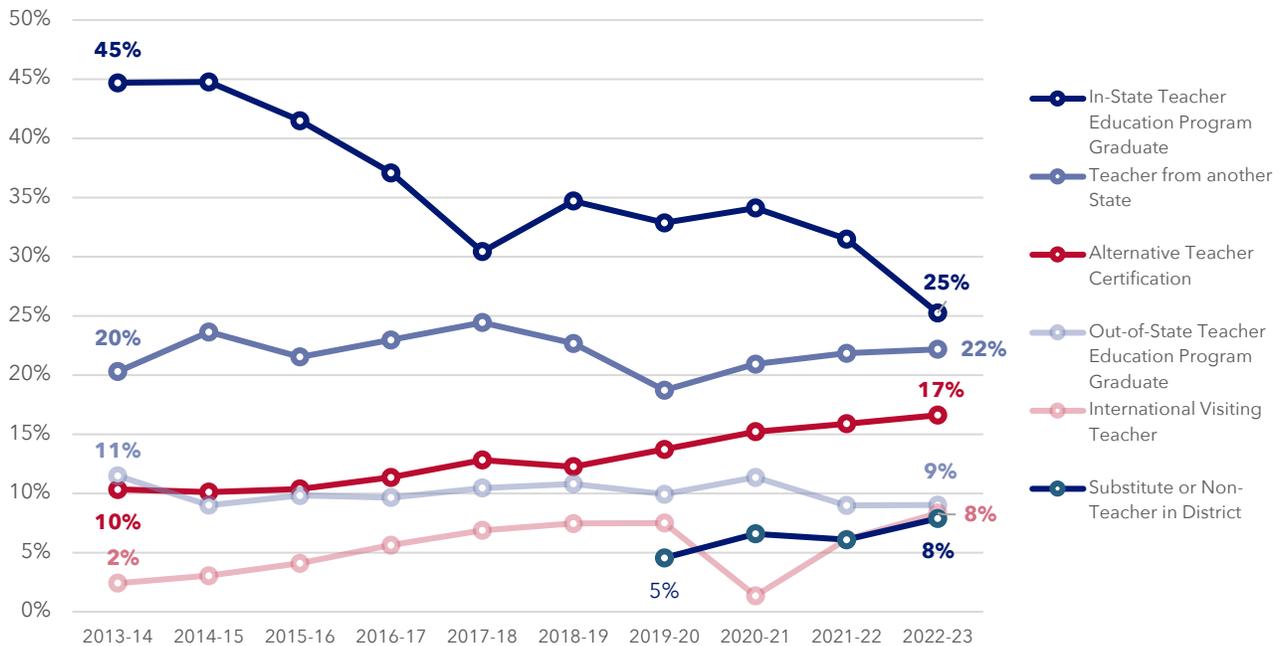
that has stayed fairly consistent over the last ten years. For Greenville County Schools (GCS), the percentage was 20%. Over the most recent five years, the district percentage has averaged 27%.

Alternative teacher certificate programs were also significant contributors of 2022-23 hired teachers for both GCS and public schools in the state. The school district percentage (20%) is three times what it was nine years earlier.

The district's 32% figure for "previous substitute or non-teacher" is way above recent 3% levels.

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

School Years 2013-14 through 2022-23



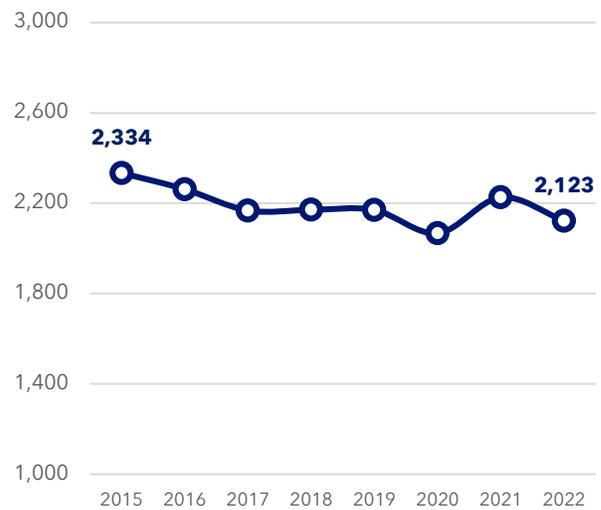
Source: Tables 3C & 3D; South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Reports, Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA). (<https://www.cerra.org/research.html>)

Number of In-State Graduates Eligible for Teacher Certification

As displayed in the above chart, 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 nine years previous. Corresponding to that, as shown in the chart to the right, the number of identified*, in-state graduates eligible for teacher certification has declined since 2015 hovering around 2,200 the last six years.

In-State Graduates Eligible for Teacher Certification

2015 through 2022



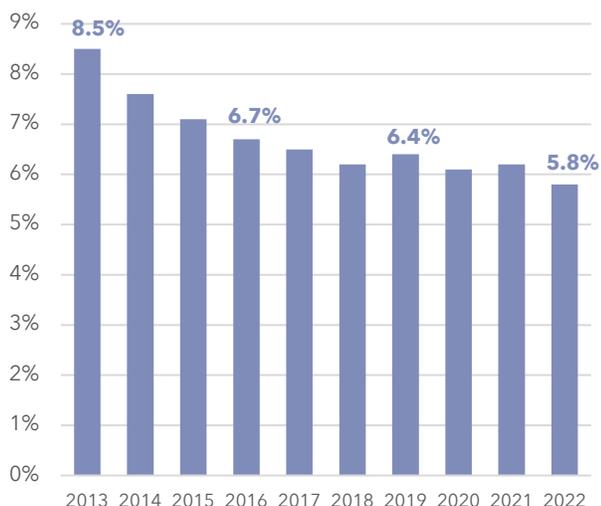
*Bachelor's graduates at South Carolina public and independent institutions plus master's graduates at in-state public institutions as reported by CERRA.

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, graduates in education accounted for more than 8% of the total in 2013. Since that year, with small exceptions, this percentage has continued to drop. Nine years later in 2022, the figure was below 6%

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

2013 through 2022

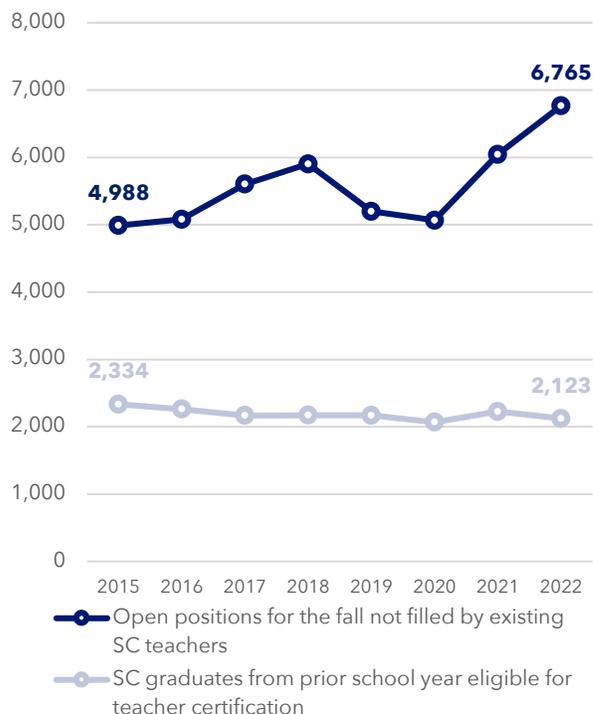


Source: SC Commission on Higher Education. (<https://www.che.sc.gov/che-data-and-reports>)

Over the last two years (2020 to 2022), the gap between open teaching positions not filled by existing South Carolina teachers and the number of in-state teacher program graduates available to fill those positions (see previous page) has grown dramatically. The gap in 2022 was 55% wider than two years earlier.

Open teaching positions in the state not filled by existing South Carolina teachers versus in-state teacher program graduates

2015 through 2022



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

THE SHORTAGE HARDEST TO FILL POSITIONS

Hardest to Fill Positions

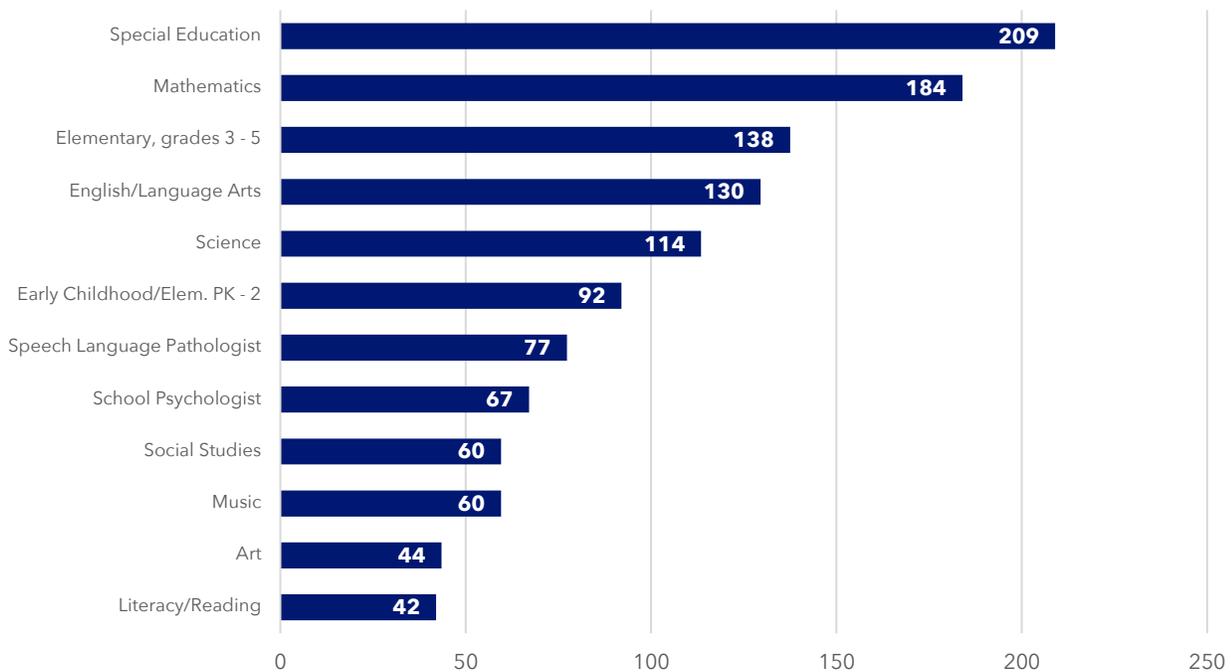
Nationally the hardest to fill teaching positions have been special education, math, science, English as a second language and English. *(Carver-Thomas, D. & Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it. Learning Policy Institute)*

There were 1,473 vacant teaching positions in South Carolina public schools at the start of the 2022-23 school year. The five fields with the most vacancies were special education, math, elementary grades

three to five, English/language arts, and science. There were 209 special education teaching vacancies, 184 in math, 138 in elementary grades three to five, 130 in English/language arts, and 114 in science.

Greenville County Schools had 28 vacant teaching positions at the start of 2022-23. The five fields with the most vacancies were 5 in elementary grades three to five, 4 in science and 3 each in special education, early childhood/elementary pre-K to second, and school counselor. *(Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement)*

Twelve Teaching Fields with the Highest Number of Vacant Positions in SC Public Schools 2022-23



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