

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.

The [state minimum teacher salary schedule](#) for 2022-23 goes up to 23 years of teaching experience. Salaries for each step increased by \$4,000 from the previous year. This resulted in a minimum salary of \$40,000 for first-year teachers in the state.

Table 1 compares South Carolina's state *minimum* salaries with those of other southeast states for 2022-23. It shows that South Carolina ranks 3rd 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 2021-22 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. The National Education Association provides a [50-state comparison](#).

Greenville County Schools Teacher Salaries

Like most other school districts, Greenville County Schools 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 [FY2022-23 salary schedule for the district](#) includes a \$2,500 pay increase (above the step increase) and now covers up to 34 years of teaching experience. First-year teachers with a bachelor's degree are paid \$45,075.

For teachers with experience beyond the salary schedule, it has been the practice of the school

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, 2022–2023

Rank	State	First Year with Bachelor's	Rank	State	10 Years Experience w/Master's
1	Alabama ¹	\$43,358	1	Alabama ¹	\$59,563
2	Mississippi	\$41,500	2	Georgia	\$54,396
3	South Carolina	\$40,000	3	North Carolina	\$51,700
3	Tennessee	\$40,000	4	South Carolina	\$50,707
5	Georgia	\$39,092	5	Mississippi	\$49,700
6	West Virginia ²	\$39,055	6	West Virginia	\$47,988
7	North Carolina	\$37,000	7	Tennessee	\$47,365
8	Arkansas	\$36,000	8	Arkansas	\$45,650
9	Kentucky	\$29,804	9	Kentucky	\$40,900
SC as a percentage of #1		92%	SC as a percentage of #1		85%

Notes: *School districts can pay more than the state minimum salaries. Florida, Louisiana and Virginia do not have teacher salary schedules. ¹187-day annual salary; math and science teachers and teachers at hard-to-staff schools receive a salary supplement above base pay ranging from \$5,000 to \$18,000 for teachers with a Bachelor's or Master's degree. ²Includes 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 2021–2022

Rank	State	Average Salary
1	Georgia	\$62,185
2	Virginia	\$62,101
	Greenville County Schools	\$56,422
3	North Carolina	\$55,905
4	Alabama	\$55,460
5	Kentucky	\$55,016
6	South Carolina	\$54,814
	Southeast (11 other states)	\$54,475
7	Tennessee	\$53,400
8	Arkansas	\$53,078
9	Louisiana	\$52,261
10	Florida	\$51,599
11	West Virginia	\$50,315
12	Mississippi	\$47,902

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>).

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 2 on this page and the two on the next provide Greenville County Schools' salary comparisons.

Table 3 ranks salaries for 2022-23 for various levels of teaching experience and professional education among the 73 regular school districts in the state. It should be noted that in all categories the highest salary is in Beaufort County public schools—a county with a higher cost of living than Greenville.

A comparison of school district average salaries in the state is available from the Center for Educational Recruitment, Retention & Advancement. For 2021-22, Greenville County Schools' average teacher salary ranked 7th in the state and was 95% of the highest.

Table 4 compares Greenville County School salaries at two levels of education and experience against those in selected 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 2022-23, those who initially applied to the program prior to July 1, 2010 and who hold a ten-year certificate continue to receive an annual salary supplement from the state of \$7,500. Those that similarly applied prior to that

Table 3: Greenville County Salaries versus Highest and Median School Districts in the State
Of 73 South Carolina School Districts*, 2022–2023

Experience	Highest District Salary	Greenville County Schools			Median District Salary
		Salary	% of Highest	State Rank	
1st-year with Bachelor's Degree	\$45,566	\$45,075	99%	3 rd	\$41,754
5 years experience					
with Bachelor's Degree	\$50,587	\$45,571	90%	8 th	\$43,830
with Master's Degree	\$56,787	\$51,585	91%	7 th	\$49,193
10 years experience					
with Bachelor's Degree	\$55,835	\$49,447	89%	12 th	\$48,310
with Master's Degree	\$62,491	\$55,874	89%	13 th	\$54,065
20 years experience					
with Bachelor's Degree	\$66,153	\$60,021	91%	6 th	\$56,533
with Master's Degree	\$73,753	\$67,616	92%	6 th	\$63,801

*Does not include the three charter school districts in the state.

Source: "Fiscal Year 2022-23 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, Greenville County Schools and Comparable Out-of-State Districts*
First Year with Bachelor's Degree and Ten Years of Experience with Master's Degree, 2022–2023

Rank	Metro School Districts	First Year with Bachelor's	Rank	Metro School Districts	10 Years Experience w/Master's
1	Little Rock, AR ⁶	\$45,500	1	Athens, GA ¹	\$61,135
2	Greenville, SC⁴	\$45,075	2	Little Rock, AR ⁶	\$59,729
3	Greensboro, NC ³	\$44,250	3	Mobile, AL ⁷	\$59,563
4	Athens, GA ¹	\$43,790	4	Greensboro, NC ³	\$58,950
5	Mobile, AL ⁷	\$43,358	5	Chattanooga, TN ²	\$58,328
6	Chattanooga, TN ²	\$43,132	6	Greenville, SC⁴	\$55,874
7	Knoxville, TN ⁵	\$43,077	7	Knoxville, TN ⁵	\$55,677
8	Oklahoma City, OK ⁸	\$42,000	8	Oklahoma City, OK ⁸	\$48,400

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

¹Clarke County School District; ²Hamilton County Dept. of Education, 201-day annual salary; ³Guilford County Schools, 10-month salary; ⁴Greenville County Schools, 190-day annual salary (1st-year salary includes four additional paid days); ⁵Knox County Schools, 200-day annual salary; ⁶Little Rock School District, 190-day annual salary; ⁷Mobile County Public Schools, 187-day annual salary; ⁸Oklahoma City Public Schools, 181-day annual salary; Sources: For all districts except Greenville, see "Sources" in Appendix; for Greenville, see the "Greenville County Schools Teacher Salary Schedule," (online: <https://sites.google.com/greenvilleschools.us/employees/resources/payroll/salaries-and-pay-schedules>).

same date but hold a five-year certificate receive an annual salary supplement of \$5,000. All who initially applied to the program after that date also receive a supplement of \$5,000. (*2022-23 South Carolina state appropriations bill, proviso 1A.71*)

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 - State Incentives Chart*)

Paid Parental Leave

Paid parental leave is not available for teachers in much of the country. Most teachers must use unused sick days and can add unpaid days. Under federal law, employers must provide up to 12 weeks of *unpaid* leave. (*Family and Medical Leave Act*)

Nine states and the District of Columbia currently mandate various versions of paid parental leave that cover public school teachers. Seven are government run and provide some percentage of the employee's salary for up to 12 weeks (one is 6 weeks). Three other states have an upcoming start date for this type of benefit. (*Bipartisan Policy Center*)

Two states with current mandates operate differently. New York's program operates through private insurers. Of the nine states, Georgia is the only one in the South. While its three-week program, initiated in 2021, covers 100% of wages, it lacks state funding. School districts must fund the paid leave on their own as well as the cost of substitutes. (*Georgia Budget and Policy Institute*)

In addition, two other states (New Hampshire and Virginia) have established private, voluntary plans that school districts and teachers may participate in. (*Bipartisan Policy Center*)

While South Carolina provided paid parental leave for state employees as of October 2022 (six weeks for those giving birth), public school teachers are not eligible since they are employed by school districts and not the state. It is estimated that one-third of public school teachers in the state are females under 40 years of age.

As a result of the above state policies, or on their own, a small percentage of individual school districts

in the country provide paid parental leave for teachers.

A 2022 survey of 148 large school districts in the country found that 18% provide paid parental leave to a birthing parent beyond earned sick days. Among these, eligibility, the maximum number of paid days and percentage of pay received for those days vary greatly. Eleven of the twenty-seven districts with paid parental leave in the survey, provide 100% paid leave. Eighteen of these districts offered some amount of leave to fathers and/or non-birthing parents when the teacher's co-parent gives birth. (*National Council on Teacher Quality*)

In South Carolina, four school districts offered paid parental leave in 2022-23: Florence 1, Spartanburg 5 and 6, and York 3. (*The Post and Courier*) The Florence 1 leave policy includes six weeks of 100% paid parental leave after giving birth, adopting or fostering. In addition, employees don't have to exhaust other forms of leave first. District employees who don't give birth, but are a co-parent, are eligible for two weeks of paid leave. (*The Post and Courier*)

Teacher Mentor Stipends

Stipends for teacher mentors of first-year teachers varies widely in South Carolina and across the country.

In a South Carolina fall 2021 survey, 21 school districts provided the amount of their annual stipend for teacher mentors. These ranged from \$200 to \$1,500. The stipend in Greenville County Schools for 2022-23 is \$250. (*Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA); Greenville County Schools*)

Examples of mentor stipends in school districts outside of South Carolina in 2021-22: the school district in Little Rock, Arkansas, paid \$1,200; in Wake County, North Carolina the stipend was \$50; the state of Delaware set their stipend at \$750 for mentoring one educator and lead mentors received \$1,500.

Loan Forgiveness Programs

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. In 2021-22 school year, 43 school districts were eligible. With state funding and administered by the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement, this program provides various financial incentives for teaching in an eligible school district. (*2022-23 South Carolina state appropriations bill, proviso 1A.51*)

This includes the Rural District Undergraduate Loan Forgiveness Program. Teachers in the eligible districts may apply for up to \$5,000 per year, for up to seven years, to be applied to the balance on any undergraduate loan for which no other loan forgiveness options apply. (*"Rural Teacher Recruitment and Retention Incentives, Legislative Report, July 2022," 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 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 previous state cap of \$10,000.

Under the 2021 law, this 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*)

Salaries Adjusted for Inflation

After accounting for inflation, teacher salaries in the U.S. have hardly budged. Nationally, inflation-adjusted, average weekly wages of teachers increased just \$29 from 1996 to 2021; the increase for other college graduates was \$445—fifteen times higher. (*Economic Policy Institute, 2022*)

In South Carolina, the change in inflation-adjusted teacher salaries is mixed. An analysis of the state's minimum teacher salary schedule found that over the ten-year period through 2022-23, gains were made in inflation-adjusted salaries for first-year and other early-year teachers with a bachelor's degree. A 7% increase occurred in inflation-adjusted, first-year-teacher salaries over the ten-year period.

However, at higher levels of experience and education, South Carolina minimum salaries have fallen after accounting for inflation. For example, the state minimum salary for a teacher with a master's degree and twenty years of experience fell \$5,000 in inflation-adjusted dollars over this time period. (*Analysis of South Carolina Dept. of Education data*)

Teacher Take-Home Pay

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

Using 2021 (the most recent) data for the twelve southeast states listed in Table 2, South Carolina's

typical take-home pay for first-year teachers ranks 9th and is \$1,600 *below* the average of the eleven other states. For those in their 15th year of teaching, the state ranks 5th and is \$800 *above* the average. For those in the 35th year, South Carolina ranks 3rd and is \$7,200 *above* the average.

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

Teacher Compensation Relative to Other Professionals

Nationally, when compared to that of non-teacher, college graduates, teacher compensation continues to lose ground. In 2021 teacher wages were 23% lower than comparison college graduates. The teacher wage penalty in 1996 was 6%.

The benefits advantage for teachers has not been enough to offset the growing wage penalty. Nationally, the teacher total compensation penalty was 14% in 2021 (a 23% wage penalty offset by a 9% benefits advantage).

In South Carolina, the weekly teacher wage penalty was 8% in 2021—fourth lowest in the country. ([Economic Policy Institute, 2022](#))

APPENDIX

Table A: 2022-23 State Minimum Teacher Salaries, South Carolina and Southeast States

Rank	State	1 st -year with Bachelor's degree
1	Alabama ¹	\$43,358
2	Mississippi	\$41,500
3	South Carolina	\$40,000
3	Tennessee	\$40,000
5	Georgia	\$39,092
6	West Virginia ²	\$39,055
7	North Carolina	\$37,000
8	Arkansas	\$36,000
9	Kentucky	\$29,804
SC as percent of #1		92%

Rank	State	3 years experience w/ Bach. degree
1	Alabama ¹	\$47,689
2	Mississippi	\$42,700
3	West Virginia ²	\$40,818
4	Tennessee	\$40,645
5	South Carolina	\$40,462
6	Georgia	\$40,115
7	North Carolina	\$40,000
8	Arkansas	\$37,350
9	Kentucky	\$29,804
SC as percent of #1		85%

Rank	State	5 years experience w/ Master's degree
1	Alabama ¹	\$54,842
2	Georgia	\$47,841
3	Mississippi	\$46,350
4	North Carolina	\$46,200
5	South Carolina	\$45,962
6	West Virginia ²	\$45,049
7	Tennessee	\$43,605
8	Arkansas	\$43,150
9	Kentucky	\$36,558
SC as percent of #1		84%

Rank	State	10 years experience w/ Master's degree
1	Alabama ¹	\$59,563
2	Georgia	\$54,396
3	North Carolina	\$51,700
4	South Carolina	\$50,707
5	Mississippi	\$49,700
6	West Virginia ²	\$47,988
7	Tennessee	\$47,365
8	Arkansas	\$45,650
9	Kentucky	\$40,900
SC as percent of #1		85%

Rank	State	20 years experience w/ Master's degree
1	Alabama ¹	\$65,795
2	Georgia	\$62,263
3	South Carolina	\$58,935
4	North Carolina	\$57,200
5	Mississippi	\$56,400
6	West Virginia ²	\$54,463
7	Tennessee	\$51,380
8	Arkansas	\$48,150
9	Kentucky	\$42,828
SC as percent of #1		90%

¹187-day annual salary; math and science teachers and teachers at hard-to-staff schools receive a salary supplement above base pay ranging from \$5,000 to \$18,000 for teachers with a Bachelor's or Master's degree. ²State 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 *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards - State Incentives Chart*)

Table B: 2022-23 Teacher Salaries, Greenville County Schools and Comparable Out-of-State Districts*

Rank	Metro School Dist.	1 st -year with Bachelor's degree
1	Little Rock, AR ⁶	\$45,500
2	Greenville, SC⁴	\$45,075
3	Greensboro, NC ³	\$44,250
4	Athens, GA ¹	\$43,790
5	Mobile, AL ⁷	\$43,358
6	Chattanooga, TN ²	\$43,132
7	Knoxville, TN ⁵	\$43,077
8	Oklahoma City, OK ⁸	\$42,000

Rank	Metro School Dist.	3 years experience w/ Bach. degree
1	Little Rock, AR ⁶	\$48,285
2	Mobile, AL ⁷	\$47,689
3	Greensboro, NC ³	\$47,250
4	Knoxville, TN ⁵	\$45,950
5	Greenville, SC⁴	\$45,258
6	Athens, GA ¹	\$44,950
7	Chattanooga, TN ²	\$44,425
8	Oklahoma City, OK ⁸	\$42,900

Rank	Metro School Dist.	5 years experience w/ Master's degree
1	Mobile, AL ⁷	\$54,842
2	Little Rock, AR ⁶	\$54,098
3	Athens, GA ¹	\$53,706
4	Greensboro, NC ³	\$53,450
5	Chattanooga, TN ²	\$52,293
6	Greenville, SC⁴	\$51,585
7	Knoxville, TN ⁵	\$50,376
8	Oklahoma City, OK ⁸	\$44,900

Rank	Metro School Dist.	10 years experience w/ Master's degree
1	Athens, GA ¹	\$61,135
2	Little Rock, AR ⁶	\$59,729
3	Mobile, AL ⁷	\$59,563
4	Greensboro, NC ³	\$58,950
5	Chattanooga, TN ²	\$58,328
6	Greenville, SC⁴	\$55,874
7	Knoxville, TN ⁵	\$55,677
8	Oklahoma City, OK ⁸	\$48,400

Rank	Metro School Dist.	20 years experience w/ Master's degree
1	Little Rock, AR ⁶	\$70,610
2	Athens, GA ¹	\$70,051
3	Greenville, SC⁴	\$67,616
4	Knoxville, TN ⁵	\$67,159
5	Chattanooga, TN ²	\$66,778
6	Mobile, AL ⁷	\$65,795
7	Greensboro, NC ³	\$64,450
8	Oklahoma City, OK ⁸	\$60,700

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

¹Clarke County School District; ²Hamilton County Dept. of Education, 201-day annual salary; ³Guilford County Schools, 10-month salary; ⁴Greenville County Schools, 190-day annual salary (1st-year salary includes four additional paid days); ⁵Knox County Schools, 200-day annual salary; ⁶Little Rock School District, 190-day annual salary; ⁷Mobile County Public Schools, 187-day annual salary; ⁸Oklahoma City Public Schools, 181-day annual salary; Sources: For all districts except Greenville, see "Sources" in Appendix; for Greenville, see the "Greenville County Schools Teacher Salary Schedule," (online: <https://sites.google.com/greenvilleschools.us/employees/resources/payroll/salaries-and-pay-schedules>).

Table 1 & Table A Sources - Other States

Alabama: "Salary Schedule for Teachers" and "TEAMS State Salary Matrix - Math and Science - 189 Day Contract," 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

Athens, GA (Clarke County School District): "Certified Teacher Salary Schedule" (online: <https://www.clarke.k12.ga.us/Page/764>).

Chattanooga, TN (Hamilton County Dept. of Education): "Certified Employees" (online: https://www.hcde.org/staff/human_resources/salary_schedules).

Greensboro, NC (Guilford County Schools): "Salary Schedule Dashboard" (online: <https://www.gcsnc.com/Page/81924>).

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

Little Rock, AR (Little Rock School District): "Certified Pay Scales, Teacher Pay Scale" (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, Teachers" (online: <https://www.okcps.org/Page/7307>).