

# **STRATEGIC TALENT ACQUISITION AND RETENTION TASKFORCE**

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**RECOMMENDATIONS  
MARCH 2025**



# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Taskforce Membership &amp; Acknowledgements</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Compensation and Evaluation</b>	<b>7</b>
Strategic Career Ladders	8
<b>Recruitment and Selection</b>	<b>10</b>
Temporary Local Eligibility Certificate for Noncertified Teachers	11
Permanent Educator Certificate	12
Count Prior Work for Years of Service	12
Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact	12
<b>Preparation</b>	<b>13</b>
Profile of a Prepared South Carolina Educator	14
Expanded Apprenticeships	15
<b>Data Collection and Reporting</b>	<b>17</b>
Centralize Data Governance and Reporting	18
Informative and Reliable Data Tools	19
Review Statewide Data Systems Purchasing Power	20
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>28</b>



# Executive Summary

The South Carolina Department of Education formed the Strategic Talent Acquisition and Retention Taskforce (Taskforce) in 2024 to recommend evidence-based policies that empower and support the South Carolina teacher workforce. This Taskforce built upon and expanded the work of a 2023 report that included recommendations from the General Assembly’s Teacher Recruitment and Retention Taskforce, chaired by former State Superintendent of Education, the late Dr. Barbara Nielsen.

Over the course of six monthly meetings, the Taskforce analyzed current challenges related to teacher vacancies and retention in South Carolina, met with leading national researchers and heard from practitioners in states tackling the same issues. With this information, the group formulated a comprehensive set of recommendations, including draft legislation and immediate next steps for the Department and State Board of Education. Each Taskforce recommendation includes information about the specific, sometimes incremental, steps stakeholders should consider for sound policy implementation.

## Strategic Talent Acquisition and Retention Taskforce Recommendations

Compensation and Evaluation	Recruitment and Selection	Preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Strategic Career Ladders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 Temporary Local Eligibility Certificate for Noncertified Teachers</li> <li>3 Permanent Educator Certificate</li> <li>4 Count Prior Work for Years of Service</li> <li>5 Join the ITMC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 Profile of a Prepared South Carolina Educator</li> <li>7 Expand Apprenticeships</li> </ul>
<b>Data Collection and Reporting</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8 Centralize Educator Workforce Data Governance and Reporting to the SCDE</li> <li>9 Informative and Reliable Data Tools</li> <li>10 Review Statewide Data Systems Purchasing Power</li> </ul>		



## Taskforce Membership

**Ms. Kathy Hipp** | Superintendent (Anderson 3)

**Mr. Barry Jacks** | Principal (Greenwood 50)

**Mr. Patrick Kelly** | Teacher (Richland 2)

**Dr. Rainey Knight** | Director of Strategic Innovation (Education Oversight Committee)

**Dr. Kim Moore** | Superintendent (Richland 2)

**Dr. Gerrita Postlewait** | Superintendent (Lexington 1)

**Dr. Frank Rodriguez** | Superintendent (Beaufort County)

**Mr. Chris Ruszkowski** | Senior Fellow (South Carolina Children's Fund)

**Ms. Monique Smalls** | District Transformation Coach (SC Department of Education)

## Acknowledgements

The SC Department of Education (SCDE) team would like to extend its gratitude to our distinguished Taskforce members for their generous investment of time and combined decades of insight as teachers, principals, coaches, local and state superintendents, and policy makers.

A special thanks also to our Taskforce expert presenters, SCDE staff, and the team at ExcelinEd who compiled and presented meaningful research, and organized and facilitated thoughtful and productive conversations.

The future of teaching in South Carolina will be brighter because of their vital collaborative work.

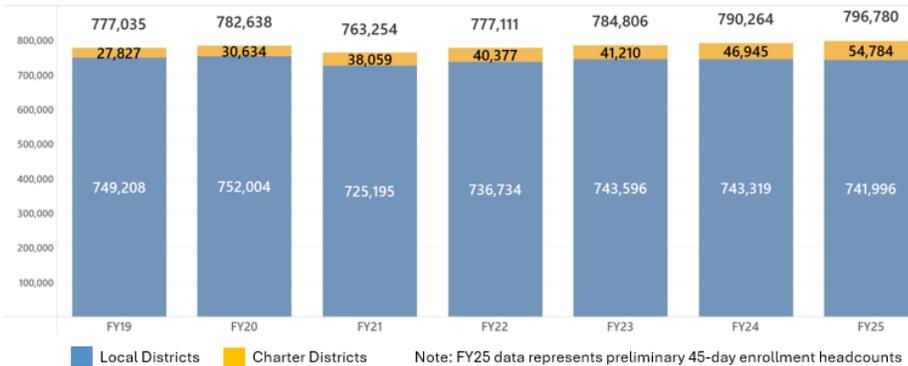


# Introduction

Research indicates that an effective teacher is the “secret sauce” of student success. Highly effective teachers help raise student academic achievement outcomes, increase college completion rates, increase student lifetime earnings, and positively influence peer educators.<sup>i</sup> Guaranteeing every student has access to highly effective teachers requires robust teacher pipelines and ensuring skilled teachers stay in the profession. But a multitude of factors in recent years have made efforts to recruit and retain teachers more challenging. Nationwide, fewer people are entering the profession, and even fewer are staying. South Carolina’s education landscape reflects both challenges and opportunities in this regard.

South Carolina has 86,957 certified teachers, yet only 64,192 are employed in public schools, with 56,945 in teaching roles.<sup>ii</sup> Over the past five years, the number of teachers and instructional staff has grown, alongside a rise in teacher vacancies. However, the most recent data from the start of the 2024 school year show vacancies have stabilized and, in fact, decreased from the prior year.<sup>iii</sup> During this same five-year period, traditional K-12 student enrollment has remained below pre-pandemic levels<sup>iv</sup>. Despite the decline in reported positions and vacancies at the start of the 2024 school year, South Carolina traditional public schools still have fewer students per teacher than before the pandemic.<sup>v</sup>

**South Carolina Public Schools 135 Day Enrollment**



Additionally, over the last five years, teacher retention rates have remained stable at around 80-85%, rebounding from post-COVID dips<sup>vi</sup>, except in middle schools, where retention rates fell below 77%, the lowest in five years.<sup>vii</sup> Of teachers who left their positions, more than half (51%) had more than 10 years of experience. Whereas 21% had 6-10 years of experience, 15% had 3-5 years of experience, and 14% had 1-2 years of experience.<sup>viii</sup>

Exit surveys from the 2023-24 school year show that most educators left their positions to teach in other school districts (39%), compared to 26% who retire, 24% who leave the profession, 7% who change roles in

## COMPENSATION AND EVALUATION

Only 26% of national teachers say the teaching profession has role flexibility with opportunities for growth and leadership.<sup>17</sup>

## RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Entering the 2024-25 school year, 74% of U.S. K-12 public schools reported challenges hiring teachers.<sup>18</sup>

## PREPARATION

A strong teacher preparation experience can make a new teacher as effective as one in their second or third year.<sup>19</sup>

## DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING

Very few states, including South Carolina sufficiently report disaggregated teacher workforce supply & demand data.<sup>20</sup>



education, and 4% who leave nonvoluntarily. Among those who moved laterally, the top reasons for leaving included lack of administrative support, student misbehavior, and a more convenient location. Those who left the profession cited student misbehavior as the primary factor. This aligns with a national trend where more teachers are asking for collaborative and supportive work environments and are open to strategic staffing models.<sup>ix</sup>

Notably, the exit survey also shows that most exiting teachers are willing to return to the classroom. Among retirees, 70% said they would consider returning, as did 64% of leavers. Key factors influencing their willingness to return include smaller class sizes, higher salaries, and protected planning time.<sup>x</sup>

The makeup of new teachers in South Carolina is changing. While the number of new teachers has generally remained stable, it dropped in 2023.<sup>xi</sup> Although small, a growing proportion of new teachers are entering the profession through alternative certification routes.<sup>xii</sup> However, this is very regional, with some districts relying more heavily on alternatively certified teachers than others to meet hiring needs.<sup>xiii</sup> Similarly, teacher vacancy rates vary by region and subject.<sup>xiv</sup>

South Carolina has undertaken significant recent efforts to stabilize the teacher workforce. Policies include raising teacher pay, engaging educators in policy discussions, enhancing school safety, implementing strategic compensation programs, unencumbered planning time for elementary and SPED teachers, and paid parental leave.<sup>xv</sup> Recent legislation raised the starting salary for teachers to \$47,000, a 47 percent increase from \$32,500 in FY 2018-19, and extended the salary schedule from 23 years to 28 years. Superintendent Weaver and Governor McMaster have set a goal to increase starting teacher pay to \$50,000 by 2026. The South Carolina Board of Education also finalized a model policy restricting student use of cell phones during the day, greatly supporting teachers by improving classroom environments and student behavior, a policy 92% of state teachers support.<sup>xvi</sup>

The South Carolina Department of Education (the Department) formed the Strategic Talent Acquisition and Retention Taskforce (Taskforce) in 2024 to recommend evidence-based policies that empower and support the South Carolina teacher workforce. This Taskforce built upon and expanded the work of a 2023 report that included recommendations from the General Assembly's Teacher Recruitment and Retention Taskforce, chaired by former State Superintendent of Education, the late Dr. Barbara Nielsen.

Over the course of six monthly meetings, the Taskforce analyzed current challenges related to teacher vacancies and retention in South Carolina, met with leading national researchers, and heard from practitioners in states tackling the same issues. With this information, the group formulated a comprehensive set of recommendations, including draft legislation and immediate next steps for the Department and State Board of Education. Each Taskforce recommendation includes information about the specific, sometimes incremental, steps stakeholders should consider for sound policy implementation.



## Compensation and Evaluation

Teacher compensation and evaluation are critical to attracting and retaining high-quality educators, fostering professional growth, ensuring accountability, and ultimately enhancing student learning outcomes.

Career ladders combine competitive compensation and meaningful evaluation systems to create supportive and rewarding environments for teachers that retain talent, lead to a more stable and effective teaching workforce, and ultimately benefit students.

Career ladder policies create tiers of certification designations where qualified teachers may earn higher salaries by taking on greater responsibilities, such as leading teams or mentoring less experienced teachers, to advance their careers while continuing to teach students.

Only 26% of national teachers say the teaching profession has role flexibility with opportunities for growth and leadership

*and*

63% of teachers want to spend more time collaborating with peers. <sup>xvii</sup>



# 1 Strategic Career Ladders

Currently, South Carolina teachers can take on additional leadership roles as teacher mentors. Mentor teachers may earn incentives, including additional compensation, release time, and assistance in the classroom. Strategic career ladder models provide more options for high-performing teachers to grow in their careers and be compensated accordingly.

Effective career ladder policies ensure:

- Greater teacher retention by validating career accomplishments and providing rewarding growth opportunities in addition to compensation;
- Support for emerging teachers through mentorship and collaboration;
- More students are exposed to highly effective educators;
- High-impact teachers are incentivized to work where they are needed most;
- District participation is optional, but incentives for participation are strong.

**The Taskforce recommends that the Department develop an opt-in teacher Career Ladder Program (CLP) and provide guidelines for funding.**

- **The CLP creates advanced license designations (e.g., Advanced Teacher, Lead Teacher, and Mentor Teacher), which signal that qualified teachers are eligible for additional roles, responsibilities, and compensation and incentivize those teachers to work where they are needed most.**
- **The Department should launch the CLP in the 2025-26 school year for a limited number of districts with a phased-in statewide rollout and, based on 2025-26 data, submit a budget request for FY26-27 to expand the program.**

## Career Ladder Program Component Recommendations:

<b>Career Ladder Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Structure             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create a district application process, including a rubric to evaluate each application and select districts that will participate in each phase;</li> <li>○ Provide districts with a process to review teacher applications and grant advanced license designations to qualified teachers;</li> <li>○ Work with a qualified third party to validate the consistency, fairness, and quality of district granted advanced licenses.</li> <li>○ Publish (annually) a list of “Targeted Career Ladder Program” schools (e.g., economically disadvantaged, rural, or academically underperforming) where designated teachers working there can earn a higher CLP stipend.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Funding             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Allocate funds for districts to provide designated teachers employed in an advanced role with a CLP stipend, paid in addition to their base salary;</li> <li>○ Designated teachers working in “Targeted Career Ladder Program” schools will earn a higher CLP stipend;</li> <li>○ Districts must use 90% of the funds on teacher stipends;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reporting             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Require participating districts to submit an annual report on their CLP designation, such as the number of teachers receiving advanced</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<p>designations in each category, who received advanced license designations, which designation they received, the evidence that they met the state criteria for that designation, the performance of educators with an advanced license and the number of teachers with designations employed in advanced roles and consider accountability mechanism for districts not meeting guidelines;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Develop an annual report for the General Assembly with recommendations for improving, expanding, or continuing the program.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Advanced License Designations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Department will establish guidance for districts on job descriptions and responsibilities for each designation, such as:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mentor Teachers – Coach teacher candidates and novice teachers, larger classroom rosters, content area interventionist, department or grade level leader, co-teaching;</li> <li>○ Lead Teachers – Coach underperforming teachers, conduct model lessons, observe instruction and facilitate teacher reflection and feedback sessions and serve on the school leadership team;</li> <li>○ Advanced Teachers – Coach and mentor to mentor/lead teacher; designations, collaborate with state, district and school leaders on educator policy and evaluation processes, member of the teacher evaluation team, design and deliver district professional development.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● The Department will determine required criteria to earn Advanced License Designations, including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Number of years teaching;</li> <li>○ A professional certificate;</li> <li>○ Mentor training;</li> <li>○ Consecutive years of exemplary evaluations;</li> <li>○ At least one metric demonstrating a positive impact on student outcomes;</li> <li>○ Evidence of effective practice in each advanced role before earning the subsequent designation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Once a teacher earns an Advanced License Designation, they can apply to schools for positions requiring those designations.</li> <li>● Position for Advanced Teachers must be primarily student-facing.</li> <li>● Designations are good for three years and are transferable between any district participating in the program.</li> <li>● Districts must provide Advanced Teachers time during the workday to complete additional responsibilities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evaluations</b></p>	<p>To ensure the validity of the program and other staffing work, the Department should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assess protocols and practices for evaluating teachers, including the reliability of evaluations and any correlation to student growth;</li> <li>● Evaluations should include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Multiple measures (both objective and subjective) of teacher performance;</li> <li>○ Observations of all teachers (multiple times per year by more than one observer);</li> <li>○ Objective measures of student achievement;</li> <li>○ At least three rating categories.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



## Recruitment and Selection

With high teacher vacancy rates in some schools and subjects and declining enrollment in educator preparation programs, districts face urgent workforce challenges. Addressing these needs requires innovative solutions such as flexible certification pathways tailored to career changers, service credit for prior work experience, and streamlined interstate reciprocity agreements. These strategies are essential to addressing workforce shortages, improving student outcomes, and making teaching a more attractive career option.

**Entering the 2024-25 school year, 74% of U.S. K-12 public schools reported challenges hiring teachers.**

- **64% of schools reported a lack of qualified candidates, and**
- **62% reported too few candidates as the top challenges in filling teaching vacancies.** xviii



## 2 Temporary Local Eligibility Certificate for Noncertified Teachers

South Carolina offers several pathways to becoming a teacher. Some of these are intended to provide districts flexibility to fill specific teaching needs but are rarely used because they require specialized candidates, which are often hard to find. Since teacher shortages are highly localized, varying by school and subject, there is a need for more certification pathways that can help address these local vacancies while maintaining the high standards of the profession.

### **The Taskforce recommends legislation to create a new Temporary Local Eligibility Certificate for Noncertified Teachers. Temporary Local Eligibility Certificate for Noncertified Teachers Component Recommendations:**

- If a district is unable to secure a teacher with a valid license for which a vacancy exists, a school district upon recommendation by the superintendent and approval by a majority of the local board may recommend the issuance of a one-year renewable local eligibility license for up to 10% of a school's staff that is valid only in the issuing school district;
- School districts issuing a Temporary Local Eligibility Certificate must submit written application and proof demonstrating that the teacher candidate meets the following qualifications:
  - Have relevant work experience in a subject or content area as the local school board and district superintendent deem appropriate for the applicable position;
  - If teaching a subject identified for testing under the [Education Accountability Act](#):
    - Have a baccalaureate or graduate degree from an accredited institution of higher education related to the applicable teaching position;
    - Demonstrated content mastery (e.g., passing a subject-area test);
  - Passed a fingerprint-based criminal background review.
- District's request for a local certificate must be reviewed within one month of submission and either approved or denied if the candidate's qualifications are insufficient.
- Locally certified teachers must:
  - Participate in the standard evaluation process;
  - Within their first year, complete state-required training such as classroom and behavior management, literacy, special education and English Language Learner (ELL) supports and requirements;
  - Have a trained mentor while employed under this certificate;
  - Within three years, demonstrate they have either:
    - Met the qualifications of effective teaching as measured by the state's evaluation system and have made a positive impact on student performance; or
    - Enrolled in a teacher certification program, including any state-approved alternative or traditional route program.
- Locally certified teachers cannot teach Special Education.
- The State Board of Education should establish a pathway for teachers holding a local eligibility certificate in good standing to obtain an Initial Certificate. This pathway should include clearly defined criteria, such as minimum coursework requirements, performance and content knowledge benchmarks, and assessment standards.



### 3 Permanent Educator Certificate

South Carolina professional certificates are typically valid for five school years, and educators must earn 120 professional development renewal credits. The renewal process is intended to encourage educators to engage in meaningful, quality professional development activities that promote student achievement. However, this can create constraints for retired teachers to re-enter the classroom and negatively impact veteran teacher retention.

**The majority of the Taskforce recommends legislation to create a Permanent Educator Certificate that teachers with at least 28 years of experience could apply for that does not require renewal credits to renew.**

### 4 Count Prior Years of Work Experience for Years of Service

Teacher salaries, especially starting salaries, are often lower than salaries of other professions that require comparable levels of education. Recruiting experienced hires can be difficult, as few are willing to take a pay cut. Recognizing prior experience in salary schedules can better attract experienced, high-quality candidates to teaching.

**The Taskforce recommends legislation that:**

- **Allows candidates applying for teaching certificates to earn one year of service credit toward the salary schedule for every two years of relevant work experience;**
- **Allows current educators to apply for previous experience to be counted as years of service credit toward the salary schedule;**
- **Allows candidates and current educators to earn up to 10 years of service credit;**
- **Requires the Department to establish a process to determine and identify qualifying relevant experience.**

### 5 Join the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact

South Carolina is not a member of the [Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact](#) (ITMC), which is an agreement that grants license reciprocity to teachers with standard licenses in compact member states. As of the time of publication, [13 states are members of the IMTC](#). Joining the ITMC would streamline reciprocity processes between South Carolina and other ITMC states, providing another quality pathway for out-of-state teachers with a valid license to get their teaching certificate in South Carolina. This would complement current reciprocity legislation and make it easier for candidates in ITMC states to move to South Carolina.

**The Taskforce recommends legislation to join the ITMC to improve license reciprocity.**

*NOTE: To join the ITMC, [bill language](#) cannot be significantly altered. Even if passed in the state, altered language will result in Compact states denying entry into the Compact.*



## Preparation

Well prepared teachers have the tools they need to be effective, which supports student learning and increases job satisfaction and the likelihood of job retention. States can strengthen the teacher pipeline by establishing a shared understanding of what it means to be a prepared educator and creating high-quality pathways for candidates to acquire the necessary skills and experience.

**A strong teacher preparation experience  
can make a new teacher as effective as  
one in their second or third year. <sup>xix</sup>**



# 6 Profile of a Prepared South Carolina Educator

The Taskforce created a preliminary Profile of a Prepared Educator for classroom teachers, a recommendation of the 2023 Teacher Recruitment and Retention Taskforce.

**The Taskforce recommend that the Department:**

- **Adopt the following “Profile of a Prepared South Carolina Educator”;**
- **Use the profile to guide teacher-related practices and policy, including aligning it to:**
  - **Accreditation processes for educator preparation providers;**
  - **Teacher professional development, certification and evaluation standards.**

Profile of Prepared South Carolina Educator		
A South Carolina Educator’s role is to prepare students for academic achievement, informed citizenship, and durable life skills as outlined in the <a href="#">Profile of the South Carolina Graduate</a> .		
Knowledge	Skills	Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates subject matter expertise</li> <li>• Understands how to align rigorous, standards-based instruction with meaningful assessment of student work</li> <li>• Displays an understanding of learning pedagogy, student learning differences, and child and adolescent development</li> <li>• Aligns instruction and high-quality materials with evidence-based practices (e.g., Science of Reading)</li> <li>• Knows and follows all legal obligations (e.g., special education requirements, safety, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executes purposeful, student-focused, and rigorous instruction</li> <li>• Engages students through effective classroom management</li> <li>• Interprets and uses multiple types of data to inform and differentiate instruction</li> <li>• Creates opportunities for and encourages knowledge building, critical thinking, creativity, and innovation</li> <li>• Communicates and collaborates effectively and respectfully with students, families, and colleagues</li> <li>• Embraces the role of life-long learner, adapting to change and incorporating new information, technology, and skills into teaching practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates belief in the inherent dignity and potential of every student</li> <li>• Sets clear and rigorous academic expectations for every student</li> <li>• Exhibits the highest level of integrity and professionalism</li> <li>• Displays a growth mindset and active desire to improve teaching practice</li> <li>• Models good citizenship through community and school involvement</li> </ul>

# 7



## Expand Registered Apprenticeships

Registered teacher apprenticeships create a pathway to becoming a teacher:

- Teacher candidates are recognized as a state or federal “apprentice” and command a salary for working in schools while receiving postsecondary training (for credit in a bachelor’s or licensure program) at no cost to them.
- Apprenticeships must provide on-the-job training for candidates under a mentor.
- Apprenticeships can support and recruit candidates from a wide range of backgrounds, including as early as high school or those with some classroom experience.

In 2024, South Carolina currently has three apprenticeship programs. These programs have limitations. For example:

- Education Preparation Providers (EPPs) apply for and run registered apprenticeship programs without state oversight or support.
- Apprenticeships are only available through three programs: Alternative Pathways to Educator Certification (APEC) at Columbia College, The Carolina Collaborative for Alternative Preparation (CarolinaCAP) through the University of South Carolina and Clemson University (which refers to their program as a teacher residency).
- All existing apprenticeship programs are designed for bachelor’s degree-holders who wish to earn a master’s degree in education and a teaching certificate.

Strong teacher apprenticeship programs and policies:

- Balance quality and accessibility to ensure new programs are highly effective while meeting workforce needs, particularly for candidates in education roles (such as paraprofessionals) seeking to transition into full-time teaching positions;
- Provide coordinated support and accountability to ensure programs expand with fidelity;
- Enable smaller districts to collaborate on meaningful apprenticeship opportunities.

**The Taskforce recommends the Department explore additional support and resources to expand registered teacher apprenticeships, including:**

- **Federally registering and codifying teacher apprenticeship programs in state legislation to provide coordinated support, accountability and funding, which will allow more EPPs and districts to participate;**
- **Increasing apprenticeship opportunities for paraprofessionals, teaching aides, and other aspiring teachers who do not have bachelor’s degrees.**



**Teacher Apprenticeship Component Recommendations:**

<p>Federally registering and codifying apprenticeship programs in state legislation</p>	<p>The Department should explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying to the federal Department of Labor as a federally registered apprenticeship program;</li> <li>• Proposing legislation to codify teacher apprenticeship programs and secure appropriations to provide consolidated support and resources statewide;</li> <li>• Funding EPPs and school districts that create apprenticeship programs that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide last-dollar scholarships to cover tuition, fees, and associated costs to ensure the apprenticeship is no- or low-cost to the apprentice;</li> <li>○ Prioritize funding for teacher apprentices in school districts with demonstrated teacher shortages or in high-needs fields, as annually defined by the Department;</li> <li>○ Require reporting on license completion, retention, and classroom performance;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Providing implementation and administrative support to cohorts of participating districts and EPPs, facilitating the sharing of best practices, and creating adaptable tools and resources;</li> <li>• Collecting and reporting data on program finances, general and subject-area teacher shortages, demographics, enrollment, completion rates, evaluations, and student outcomes of teacher apprentices.</li> </ul>
<p>Increasing apprenticeship opportunities for aspiring teachers who do not have a bachelor's degree</p>	<p>The Department should explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding apprenticeship programs for paraprofessionals and teaching aids who have classroom experience but do not have a bachelor's degree by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Proposing legislation to amend eligibility requirements for alternative certification programs to accept those without a bachelor's degree so they can simultaneously earn a degree and teaching certificate;</li> <li>○ Prioritizing last-dollar scholarship funding to be used for apprentices with classroom experience, such as paraprofessionals and teaching aides.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



## Data Collection and Reporting

**Reliable and accurate data can help state leaders, education agencies, local districts, and prospective teachers make informed decisions to improve the educator workforce. This requires codified and consolidated data governance, collection, and reporting. Reliable data collection and reporting can help to fill job vacancies, create efficiencies, and reduce costs.**

**Very few states, including South Carolina, sufficiently report disaggregated teacher workforce supply & demand data. <sup>xx</sup>**



# 8

## Consolidate Data Governance and Reporting in the Department

South Carolina has a legislatively created Commission tasked with creating an Educator Preparation Program Report Card.

- The Commission on Higher Education (CHE) was legislated to form the Commission with the assistance of the Department of Education, the State Board of Education, the Center for Research on Teacher Education (SC-TEACHER) and the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office.
- The legislature charged the Commission with conducting a detailed assessment of the current data infrastructure, developing metrics, determining weightings, constructing a unified data upload system and constructing public and private facing data reports including, but not limited to, the Educator Preparation Program Report Card.

Effective data governance policies:

- Assign responsibilities to agencies based on their roles, expertise, and data;
- Ensure a clear purpose, decision-making process, and streamlined structure for data collection and reporting;
- Establish criteria for data accuracy, completeness, consistency, and timeliness;
- Involve key stakeholders to meet state needs;
- Requires critical metrics to be collected and reported.

South Carolina can ensure that the Commission leverages effective governance, allowing policy and education leaders to develop better solutions with complete information, making state efforts more accurate and efficient.

**The Taskforce recommends legislative action to:**

- **Replace the CHE with the Department as the agency responsible for leading the Commission, including preparing the Educator Preparation Program Report Card;**
- **Codify additional data governance and collection responsibilities;**
- **Create a preparation and certification review committee.**

**Consolidate Data Governance and Reporting Component Recommendations:**

<p>Consolidate Data Governance and Reporting to the South Carolina Department of Education ( SCDE)</p>	<p>The Taskforce recommends legislation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace the CHE with the Department as the agency responsible for leading the Commission, with all identified agencies continuing to support the Commission; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing the Department with the funding and FTEs currently provided to the CHE for this work;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Create shared, standardized definitions for key metrics that would apply across all applicable data-related work, including, but not limited to, specific definitions of staffing vacancies, unlicensed teachers, out-of-field teachers, and emergency credentials;</li> <li>• Establish a state-level teacher-student data link (TSDL) to connect student outcomes with the educators responsible for their learning for use in data tools and reports, including the Educator Preparation Report Card and a new Educator Supply and Demand Data Dashboard (see recommendation below).</li> </ul>
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<p>Educator Preparation and Certification Review Committee</p>	<p>The Taskforce recommends that the Commission, led by the Department, create and select members for an educator preparation and certification review committee that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets 1-2 times a year to offer feedback and provide recommendations to ensure that the educator preparation and certification systems and policies meet the state’s needs and maintain coherent and consistent expectations;</li> <li>• Includes members from local districts, education preparation providers, state policymakers, and community stakeholders from across the state who represent a diversity of experience and thought;</li> <li>• Reviews data from the data dashboard and report card, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ EPP enrollment and completion;</li> <li>○ Types and requirements of certification pathways;</li> <li>○ Outcomes of each pathway;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Creates an annual report to the Legislature with findings and recommendations on educator preparation programs and certification policies needed to support the state’s teacher workforce needs;</li> <li>• Allows interested members to apply to participate on the committee.</li> </ul>
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## 9 Informative and Reliable Data Tools

South Carolina uses three primary tools to collect and report teacher data:

- [SC TEACHER](#) reports on educator retention, characteristics, school working conditions, and teacher exit surveys annually (note: as of 2024, SC Teacher is in the process of developing an interactive longitudinal dashboard with state-level data).
- CERRA publishes an annual [Supply and Demand Survey](#), which collects information from districts on new educators, movers, leavers, and vacancies.
- CERRA also has a jobs database where districts and schools across the state can voluntarily post open positions.
- As noted in Recommendation 8 above, full implementation of the Educator Preparation Program Report Cards is pending as of late 2024.

Effective educator workforce reporting tools like dashboards can provide stakeholders with data necessary to make informed decisions. Prospective teachers, current educators, policymakers, and school leaders can answer questions such as:

- How many teaching positions are available, and where are there shortages?
- How many educators are currently being trained?
- How long are educators staying in the profession by prep program and certification type?
- How are teachers impacting students' learning by prep program and certification type?

**The Taskforce recommends legislation and/or Department action to create consolidated, easy-to-navigate, and publicly available data tools and reports, including:**

- **A real-time and interactive educator supply and demand data dashboard containing both longitudinal educator pipeline data and current vacancies by district and subject;**
- **A statewide educator job board which integrates into the educator supply and demand data dashboard and allows prospective educators to find and apply for real-time openings.**



**Data Tools Component Recommendations:**

<p>Educator Supply and Demand Data Dashboard</p>	<p>The Taskforce recommends legislation to develop, maintain, and regularly update an Educator Supply and Demand Data Dashboard. The legislation should require that a dashboard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visually represents the state’s data collection, reporting, and analyses;</li> <li>• Presents data in easy-to-understand ways to support informed decision-making (e.g., presented both as numbers and visuals, such as maps);</li> <li>• Exists in a single, public location with navigable hyperlinks;</li> <li>• Includes, at a minimum, the following data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Educator vacancies disaggregated by school, grade level, and endorsement;</li> <li>○ The number of educator positions filled by long-term substitute teachers, unlicensed teachers, out-of-field teachers, and educators with emergency credentials disaggregated by school, grade level, and endorsement;</li> <li>○ The number and endorsement area(s) of active educator licenses;</li> <li>○ The number of new educator licenses issued, disaggregated by certification type and pathway;</li> <li>○ Educator demographic data;</li> <li>○ The number and endorsement area(s) of licenses that expired in the past year and the reason for the expiration.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Jobs Database</p>	<p>The Taskforce recommends legislation to ensure a teacher jobs board is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Searchable by county, LEA, school, grade level, educator type, and endorsement area;</li> <li>• Allows candidates to apply to posted district jobs directly through the website;</li> <li>• Integrates anonymized data into the educator supply and demand dashboard.</li> </ul>

## 10

# Unify Local Education Agencies Data Systems

**The Taskforce recommends that the Department explore unifying LEA’s enterprise resource data collection standards and systems, to lower comprehensive costs, streamline reporting, and improve efficiency. This includes:**

- Linking human resources and finance data to improve the efficiency of reporting and analysis;
- Leveraging state-wide contracts to increase purchasing power with vendors and reduce district costs;
- Constructing a unified data upload system for LEAs to utilize, increasing accuracy and decreasing time-consuming reporting requirements



# Appendix

## Appendix A: Meeting One Recap

May 29, 2024, 9:30-11:00 AM, EST | Virtual

### Presenters

- Kevin O’Gorman, Superintendent, Edgefield and served on the TRR Taskforce
- Frank Rainwater, Director, South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs

### Major Takeaways

- The mission of the Strategic Talent Acquisition and Retention Taskforce (START) is to develop policy proposals that operationalize specific recommendations of the 2022-23 Teacher Recruitment and Retention (TRR) Taskforce related to teacher compensation and certification.
- Kevin O’Gorman presented the work of the TRR Taskforce. Important recommendations fell into four major categories:
  - Compensation and Evaluation (e.g., pay, career ladder)
  - Recruitment Recommendations (e.g., PR campaign, loan forgiveness, GYO)
  - Educator Preparation (e.g., profile of a teacher, mentoring, and induction)
  - Working Conditions (e.g., planning time, community engagement, student behavior)
- Frank Rainwater provided demographic and economic data that affect teacher recruitment and compensation in South Carolina
  - The projected student population will be approximately stable, but adult and retired populations are projected to increase, with retirees soon outnumbering students
  - The number of teachers with 0 years of experience has generally been stable over time, but a significant drop in 2022-23
  - There are almost 87k certified teachers in SC, but only 64k are employed in a public school, and only 57k are in a teaching position
- Reflecting on the presentations, current Taskforce members reflected on:
  - Difficulties in hiring professionals like speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and career and technical education (CTE) teachers
  - Lack of incentives to encourage teachers to work in hard-to-staff positions or schools
  - The importance of principals in setting working conditions
  - How to identify which teachers are making the most impact and how to reward and recognize them for their work

### Questions Raised

- How do we help to get certified teachers back into the classroom?



## Appendix B: Meeting Two Recap

June 25, 2024, 11:15-12:45 AM ET | Virtual

**Presenter:** Dr. Eric Hanushek, Paul and Jean Hanna Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University

### Major Takeaways

- The best way to advance schools is to improve teacher quality and increase the reach and impact of effective teachers. For example:
  - Giving more students to more effective teachers
  - Having more effective teachers work as mentors to novice teachers
  - Strategically recruiting effective teachers to schools with greater needs (e.g., staffing shortages, lower student results, or rural/low-income schools)
- Highly effective teachers yield nearly \$2 million more in student lifetime earnings per class than low-performing teachers
- Teachers respond to incentives, as seen in Washington, D.C., and Dallas, TX. High-performing teachers are willing to move to schools where they are needed if compensation incentives are high enough
- According to Dr. Hanushek's research on Dallas's ACE model, which provided incentives for high-performing teachers to work at state/district-identified high-need schools:
  - The highest performing teachers switched to these identified schools to receive additional compensation. Control schools, where teachers did not receive additional compensation, realized no gains in student achievement.
  - In the first year of the ACE program, average student test scores in low-performing schools that received ACE teachers increased to the district average in Year 1 and rose above the district average in Years 2 and 3. Scores decreased in Year 4 when schools were no longer identified as high need and teachers no longer received additional compensation.
- Sound implementation of strategic compensation policies requires strong district leadership and a coalition of the willing at both state and district levels. This support is critical for a successful transition to strategic compensation and staffing systems
- Strategic compensation policies may complement strategic staffing policies. Together, these policies may:
  - Help schools and districts develop more effective teacher evaluation models
  - Create teacher career ladders
  - Reward and retain high-performing teachers
  - Recruit high-performing teachers to under-staffed schools
  - Improve working conditions for teachers and support staff



## Appendix C: Meeting Three Recap

July 31, 2024, 11:00-12:30 ET | Virtual

### Presenters:

- Dr. Thomas E. Hodges, Dean & Professor, USC's College of Education
- Dr. P. Ann Byrd, Executive Director & Lead Strategist, SC TEACHER

### Major Takeaways

What we know from data about the current South Carolina educator workforce:

- Traditional educator preparation programs (EPPs) still have the largest number of enrollees, but there is an increasing number of enrollees in alternative certification programs as traditional EPPs have seen a major decline in numbers post-pandemic
- The state has generally stable teacher retention rates over time, including during and since the COVID pandemic, with the exception of middle school teachers
- The reasons a teacher chooses to leave a school position vary, but in 2022-23, lateral moves are the largest percent, and retirees as the second largest percent.
- SC TEACHER is working on building a larger database using predictive analytics to look deeper at attrition and mobility using community data to inform its statistics
- South Carolina educator data that we want to have
  - Longitudinal data of individual teachers
  - Student outcomes cross-referenced with teachers and the pathway they took to get into the classroom
  - Info on who is *not* entering an EPP and why they aren't (e.g. PRAXIS Core tests)
  - Real-time vacancy data
  - A publicly available EPP report card

### Group Discussion

- The taskforce discussion centered on the discussion "How are states attracting and supporting career switchers?"
- When asked to select which of the three priorities outlined in the pre-reading the group voted to discuss opening up avenues to local certification.
- Group members believe to do local certification well:
  - Hiring should be a district decision, but with state guardrails
  - Non-negotiable statewide guardrails include some base-level training on special education, participation in targeted mentoring/induction, and that teachers be evaluated on some measurement of student outcomes
  - One option currently available to districts is to develop a State Board of Education-approved Alternative Certification program. These are district-embedded alternative certification programs with their own training, must meet the same state-level induction and mentoring requirements, and require all candidates to pass a subject area assessment prior to admittance. Currently, Greenville, Charleston, and Florence offer approved Alternative Certification programs.
  - To better assess the effectiveness of certification pathways and possible strategies to recruit teachers, South Carolina needs to be able to collect data directly from EPPs and connect student data to the teacher



## Appendix D: Meeting Four Recap

August 27, 2024, 9:00-10:30 ET | Virtual

### Presenters:

- Sara Morrison, Executive Director of the Tennessee State Board of Education
- Matthew Holzgrafe, Division Director of District Talent Systems at Texas Education Agency
- Jack Elsey, Founder and CEO of the Michigan Educator Workforce Initiative

### Major Takeaways

#### Michigan

- The Michigan Educator Workforce (MEW) Initiative launched Talent Together, which has grown into one of the largest grow-your-own (GYO) programs nationwide. As of 2024 it includes all 56 districts and 11 colleges/universities.
- Talent Together provides districts additional capacity to start and administer GYO programs, reducing costs, increasing ROI, and decreasing the risk to districts.
- Since launching, they have seen the following results:
  - After a \$90M state investment, there are 1,300 candidates currently in the pipeline
    - Of those, around 65% come from those currently working in schools (paraprofessionals, substitutes, etc.)
  - Year 1 saw a 94% retention rate for those who enrolled in college coursework
- MEW's third-party implementation (public-private partnership) has a few critical components for success:
  - A robust communication structure as the program was launching
  - One statewide program hosted on one website and with one unified message
- However, it also came with challenges:
  - Talent Together accepted applications before securing funding, although the quantity admitted was then used as leverage in the legislature
  - Coordination between the labor and education sectors
  - An ongoing need for quality information about teacher demand

#### Tennessee

- Tennessee saw a need for different types of permits and pathways into teaching to help the state balance flexible hiring without sacrificing high standards. They focused on:
  - Creating pathways and coherence in their system
  - Ensuring guardrails were in place so incoming candidates with flexible permits would be effective educators who stay in the classroom
  - Developing pathways for candidates with industry experience or finishing college EPPs
- Evidence shows that these differentiated permits have eased teacher vacancies, with less than 2% of CTE positions vacant and decreases in total vacancies
- Tennessee also publishes Report Cards with data on EPPs. The Report Cards:
  - Are an online, user-friendly tool that is used by aspiring educators, hiring districts, and state leaders to assess the outcomes of EPPs.
  - Allow districts to form effective collaborations and partnerships with EPPs based on data trends.
- Through this process, Tennessee has learned the importance of systematizing stakeholder feedback and determining state-level data systems early in the process



## Texas

- The Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) creates a pathway for Texas teachers to earn a six-figure salary.
  - Teachers earn an allotment for their district based on their performance, if they work in a rural school, and the economic needs of the school's student population.
  - Districts opt-in via state approval of their teacher evaluation system.
  - Districts decide if non-core teachers qualify for TIA. Many districts are looking into different assessments or evaluation approaches (e.g., a portfolio) for those teachers
- Since launching TIA, Texas has seen promising results:
  - As of 2024, 600 districts participate, with approximately 25,000 teachers
  - 40% of rural districts are participating
  - In TIA-participating school districts, teachers are retained at 8 percentage points higher than in nonparticipating districts
- Several components led to the success and sustainability of TIA:
  - The Texas Education Agency (TEA) developed regional service centers to provide robust technical assistance and individualized support.
  - Supported districts to un-silo human resources and academic components
  - Consolidated data systems on the district and state level
  - Built TIA allotment into the funding formula as a sustainable source of funding

## Other Important Considerations

- It is important to identify barriers teacher candidates face and opportunities for how to better support candidates, such as:
  - Providing financial and academic support as well as flexibility for those who were close to passing licensing exams
  - Gathering data on first-time licensing exam pass rates and retesting rates by EPPs
  - Evaluating alternatives to licensing exams



## Appendix E: Meeting Five Recap

September 18, 2024, 9:00-3:30pm ET | In Person

### Major Takeaways

The fifth South Carolina Strategic Talent Acquisition and Retention Taskforce (START) meeting was an in-person, day-long working session to provide feedback on specific recommendations for the Taskforce to consider and for the group to formalize policies they want to recommend.

The Taskforce discussed the potential recommendations on compensation and evaluation, recruitment and selection, preparation, working conditions, and data systems. The discussion was robust and identified several clear action items. One hundred percent of the attending Taskforce thought the meeting objectives were met, that the meeting was effectively moderated, and felt they had an opportunity to participate.

There were three priority recommendations that the group supported unanimously:

1. **Career Ladders:** All Taskforce members in attendance agreed or strongly agreed with establishing strategic career ladders to create more leadership opportunities that retain effective teachers, develop pathways to competitive and sustainable salaries, support new and underperforming teachers, and incentivize teachers to work where they are needed most. The Taskforce wants to ensure the policy requires that the Department determines eligibility for advanced roles.
2. **Data:** One hundred percent of the attending group agreed or strongly agreed with creating interactive real-time teacher supply and demand dashboards. The state is already working on EPP report cards, but the group wants to accelerate this by moving them under the Department and combining the efforts to develop both the EPP report cards and the supply and demand dashboard. They also want to use this opportunity to recommend that the state look for unified data systems to leverage statewide contracts.
3. **Profile of a Prepared Educator:** The entire group also expressed positive feedback on the Profile of a Prepared South Carolina Educator, which identifies the knowledge, skills, and values teachers should have to be effective. The group is excited about how EPPs, future educators, parents, and stakeholders may use this to help with recruitment, professional development, and evaluations.

Additionally, the group discussed and aligned on the following recommendations: pathways for local and permanent certifications, counting prior years of work in the salary and benefits schedule, joining the Interstate Mobility Contract, and expanding teacher residencies.



## Appendix F: Meeting Six Recap

October 17, 2024, 1:00-2:30 ET | Virtual

### Major Takeaways

- The Taskforce reviewed changes to the recommendations since the in-person meeting and aligned on final key policy considerations.

### Group Discussion

#### Compensation and Evaluation

- Taskforce supports that the career ladder program will not be limited to teachers in tested subjects and supports that advanced teachers will be primarily in teaching roles
- Some discussion on the benefits and risks of a pilot or rolled-out program

#### Recruitment and Selection

- The Temporary Local Eligibility Certificate will be very beneficial for recruiting STEM teachers, especially when paired with counting prior work experience toward the teacher salary schedule. However, this certification should not be used for special education.
- Need to consider the feasibility of counting prior work experience toward the teacher salary schedule. The Taskforce discussion suggested a cap on how many years can go toward the salary schedule and a 2:1 ratio.

#### Preparation

- The Taskforce is excited about apprenticeships as a pathway toward certification, specifically in schools with large needs for bilingual teachers, but identifies that candidates must receive mentors, enroll in credit-bearing courses, and that the state must ensure programs are high-quality.

#### Data Collection and Reporting

- The Taskforce was supportive of data collection and reporting recommendations, expressing some components are already underway.



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