



Strategic Talent Acquisition and Retention Taskforce

Report Overview | March 2025

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. The Taskforce was set up following recommendations in 2023 for ways to improve teacher recruitment and retention. That effort was initiated by the General Assembly and led by the late Dr. Barbara Nielsen, former State Superintendent of Education.

Over the course of six months, 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:

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.

1	Strategic Career Ladders	The Taskforce recommends that the Department develop an opt-in teacher Career Ladder Program (CLP) and provide guidelines.
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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.

2	Temporary Local Eligibility Certificate for Noncertified Teachers	The Taskforce recommends legislation to create a new Temporary Local Eligibility Certificate for Noncertified Teachers, a one-year renewable local eligibility license for up to 10% of a school's staff, valid only in the issuing school district for district with teacher vacancies.
3	Permanent Educator Certificate	The majority of the Taskforce recommends legislation to create a Permanent Educator Certificate that teachers with at least 28 years of experience apply for that does not require renewal credits to renew.
4	Count Prior Work for Years of Service	The Taskforce recommends legislation that allows current educators and candidates applying for teaching certificates to earn one year of service credit toward the salary schedule for every two years of relevant work experience, for up to 10 years of service credit.
5	Join the Interstate Mobility Compact	The Taskforce recommends legislation to join the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact to improve license reciprocity with other states.



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.

6	Profile of a Prepared South Carolina Educator	The Taskforce recommends that the Department adopt the included “Profile of a Prepared South Carolina Educator” and use the profile to guide teacher-related practices and policy.
7	Expand Apprenticeships	The Taskforce recommends the Department explore additional support and resources to expand registered teacher apprenticeships.

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.

8	Consolidate Data Governance and Reporting	The Taskforce recommends legislative action to make the Department of Education the agency responsible for data collection and reporting, replacing the Commission on Higher Education. Duties would include preparing the Educator Preparation Program Report Card, codifying additional data governance and collection responsibilities and creating a preparation and certification review committee.
9	Informative and Reliable Data Tools	The Taskforce recommends legislation and/or Department action to create consolidated, easy-to-navigate and publicly available data tools and reports.
10	Review Statewide Data Systems Purchasing Power	The Taskforce recommends that the Department explore unifying Local Education Agencies’ enterprise resource data collection standards and systems to lower comprehensive costs, streamline reporting and improve efficiency.

“The work of the START Task Force is another important step forward in making South Carolina the best state in the nation to teach. While no single policy can fully reverse the state's ongoing educator shortages, the range of policies proposed in the report provides the type of comprehensive approach necessary to address a multi-faceted challenge.”

- Taskforce Member