

South Carolina Administrator Workforce Profile for 2023–24

MAY 2025

This overview highlights key takeaways from the South Carolina Administrator Workforce Profile for 2023–24, a comprehensive analysis of public school principals and assistant principals across the state. The report explores demographics like education, experience, evaluation outcomes, and tenure, with a focus on variation across school organizational levels. It also incorporates longitudinal data from recent years and district-level analyses to provide insights into workforce trends and local leadership stability.

For the full profile of South Carolina school administrators, read the report at <https://www.sc-teacher.org/EWP-admin-workforce-may2025>.

- (+) At the start of the 2023–24 school year, the state's public school districts employed 3,660 total administrators, including 1,380 principals and 2,280 assistant principals.

Key Findings

DEMOGRAPHICS

Of principals and assistant principals in South Carolina,

- About 62% were female, higher than the national percentage but lower than the percentage of female teachers in the state.
- White administrators made up about 63% of both groups.
- Black administrators comprised over 35%, more than twice the percentage of Black teachers statewide.

EXPERIENCE

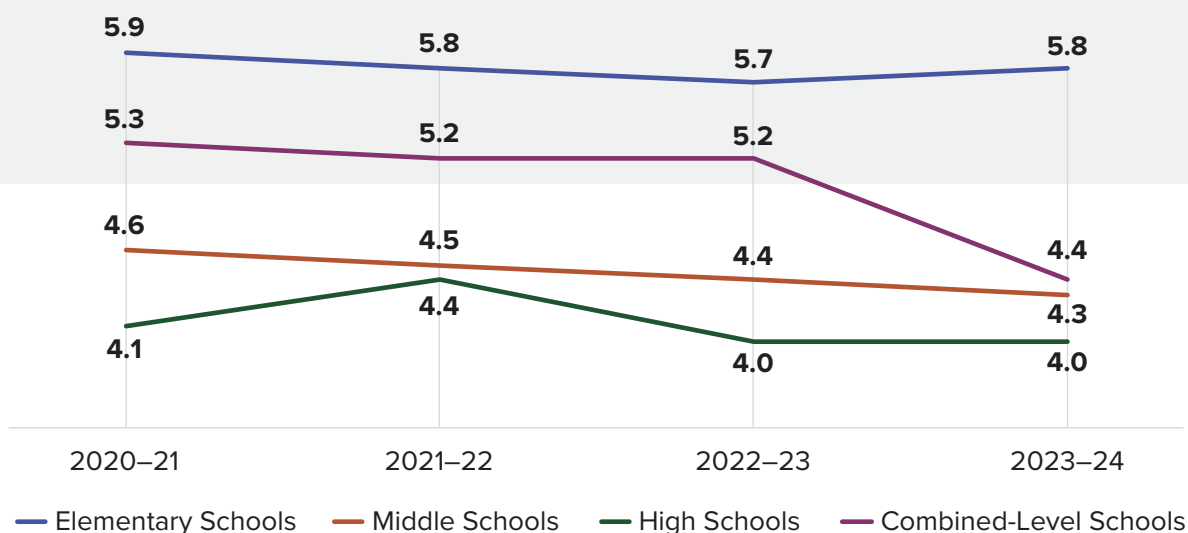
Principals had an average of 22 years of experience in education, while assistant principals had an average of 18 years, highlighting the longer career span typically associated with principal roles.

EDUCATION

Approximately 17% of principals and 10% of assistant principals held a doctoral degree, reflecting the conventional progression of assistant principals pursuing advanced degrees as part of the school leadership pathway.

Trends in Principal Tenure Across Organizational Levels

From 2020–21 to 2023–24, average principal tenure at their current school remained relatively stable across most organizational levels. Elementary school principals had the highest average tenure, while high school principals had the lowest. Combined-level school principals experienced a decline in tenure during the most recent year. Research suggests that principals influence school performance through long-term efforts to build supportive environments and retain effective teachers.



The Relationship Between Principal Tenure and School Performance

Across all organizational levels in 2023–24, longer principal tenure was positively associated with higher school ratings. The strongest correlations were observed in middle schools (0.33) and combined-level schools (0.27).

While these findings do not establish causation, they suggest that sustained leadership may contribute to school improvement or that principals at higher-performing schools are more likely to remain in their roles. Further research is needed to clarify the dynamics underlying these associations.

HIGHER SCHOOL RATINGS

Longer
Principal
Tenure

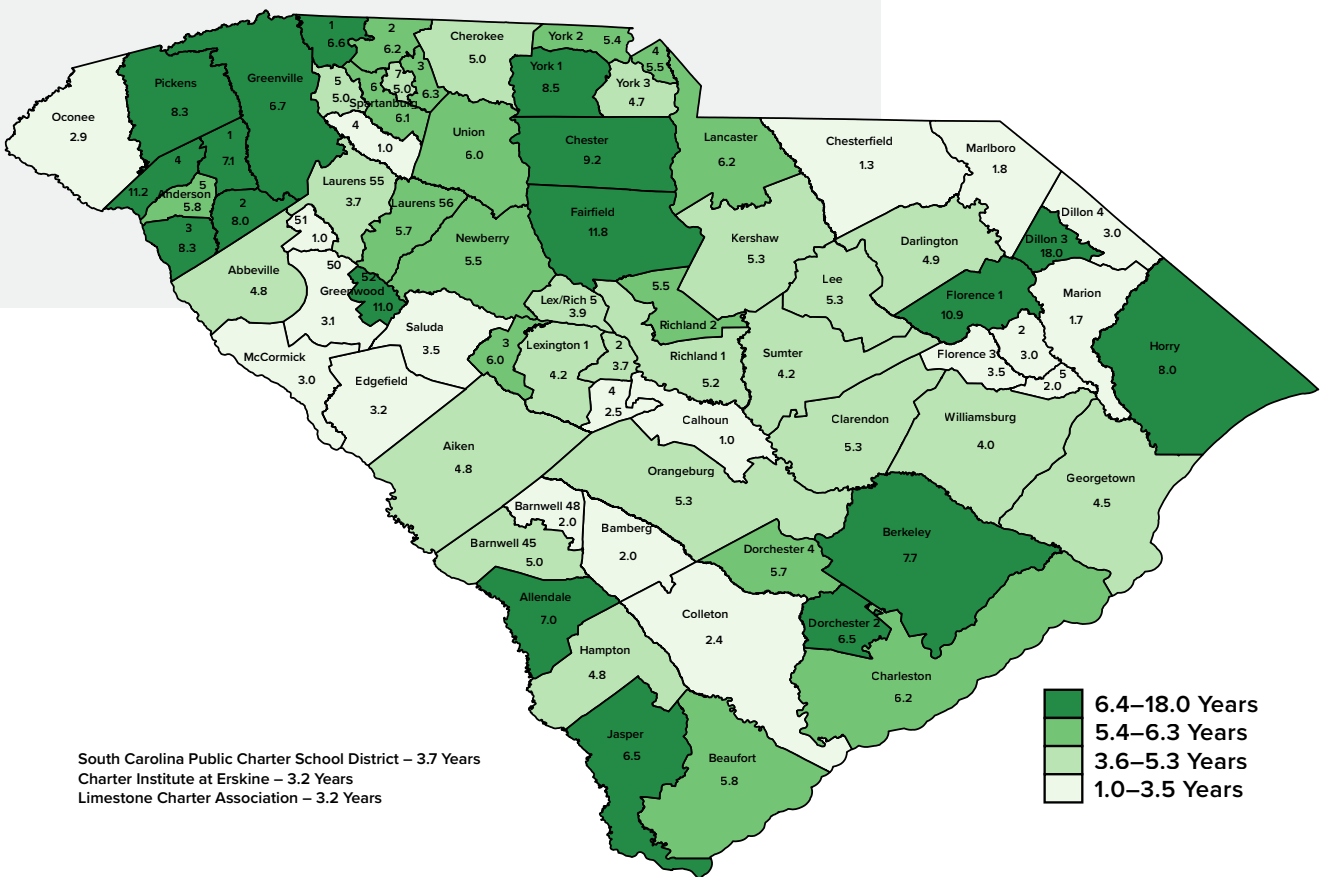
Shorter
Principal
Tenure

Elementary Schools: District Variation in Principal Tenure

In 2023–24, elementary school principals had the highest average tenure among all organizational levels. With that, tenure varied widely among South Carolina districts. Some districts reported averages as low as 1.0 year, while others reported up to 18.0 years, often reflecting the presence of a single long-serving principal.

These variations highlight the need to interpret district-level averages within local context, as factors such as district size, leadership transitions, and internal staffing practices can significantly influence tenure data without necessarily indicating broader workforce instability.

Average Principal Tenure in Elementary Schools Across South Carolina





Summary and Next Steps

Findings from the South Carolina Administrator Workforce Profile for 2023–24 show a highly experienced workforce with notable variation across organizational levels and districts. Longer principal tenure was positively associated with higher school ratings, underscoring the potential impact of sustained leadership on school performance.

To build on this work, SC TEACHER is developing a statewide administrator working conditions survey. This new tool will capture administrators' perspectives on their workplace resources, demands, and job satisfaction. Insights from the survey will complement existing workforce data and provide a richer understanding of the conditions that support effective, stable leadership in South Carolina schools.



ABOUT SC TEACHER

SC TEACHER provides comprehensive research, visualized data profiles, and compelling stories to communicate impact of educator pipeline policies and promote transformative practices that inform policymakers, educators, and communities who care about education scaling economic opportunity.

[SC-TEACHER.ORG](https://sc-teacher.org)