

South Carolina Administrator Workforce Profile for 2024–25

MAY 2026

South Carolina’s public school administrator workforce is shaped by those who enter leadership roles, the professional characteristics they bring, and how long they remain in their positions. In exploring who these leaders are, the South Carolina Administrator Workforce Profile for 2024–25 examines their personal and professional demographics, the pathways through which newly hired administrators enter the workforce, and how principal retention has trended over the past 6 years. Drawing on statewide data, this overview distills the report’s key findings.

For the full profile of South Carolina public school administrators, read the report at www.sc-teacher.org/ewp-admin-workforce-may2026/.

South Carolina Administrator Workforce Snapshot

In 2024–25, South Carolina’s public school administrator workforce included 1,385 principals and 2,351 assistant principals. Examining the personal and professional characteristics of this population provides a foundation for understanding the current condition of school leadership across the state.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

In 2024–25, approximately 63% of South Carolina’s assistant principals were female. Just less than two-thirds were White, and approximately 36% were Black. Assistant principals averaged 18.4 years of experience, and approximately 11% held a doctoral degree. The mean age of assistant principals was 44.1 years, with the largest concentration falling in the 30–39 age range.

PRINCIPALS

Approximately 61% of South Carolina’s principals were female in 2024–25. The racial composition was nearly identical to that of assistant principals. Principals averaged 22.2 years of experience in education, and approximately 18% held a doctoral degree. The mean age of principals was 47.5 years, with greater representation in older age groups than among assistant principals.

18.4

Average Years of Experience

63.3%

Female Assistant Principals

31.6%

Assistant Principals Under Age 40

10.8%

Hold Doctoral Degrees

22.2

Average Years of Experience

60.5%

Female Principals

15.8%

Principals Under Age 40

17.7%

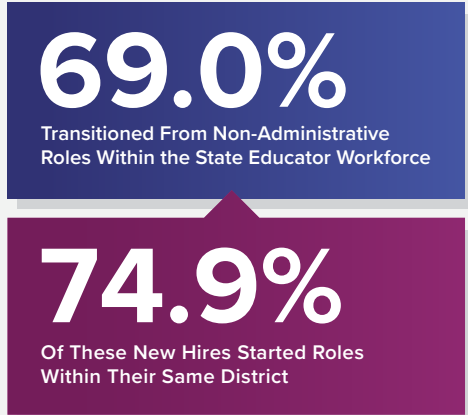
Hold Doctoral Degrees

Entry Into the South Carolina Administrator Workforce in 2024–25

A total of 484 individuals were newly hired into administrative roles in South Carolina public schools in 2024–25. Approximately 85% entered as assistant principals.

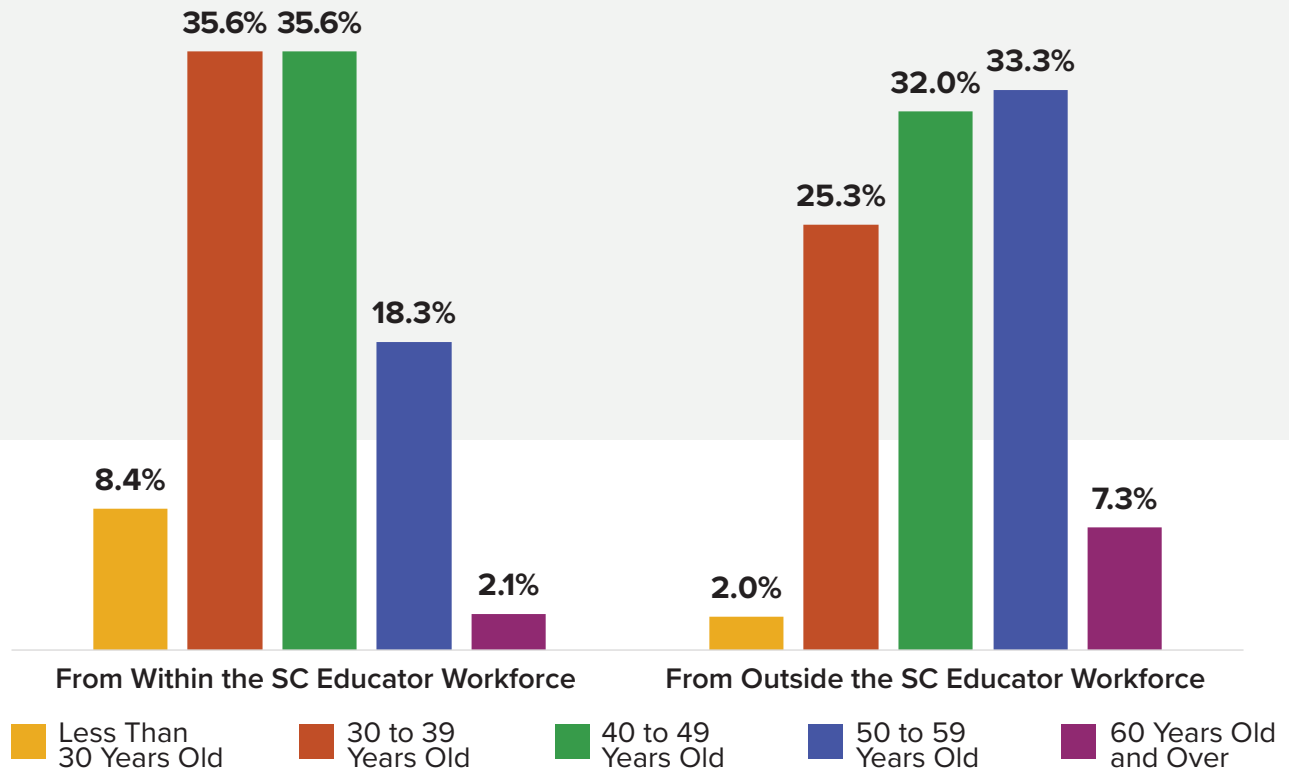
FROM WITHIN THE STATE EDUCATOR WORKFORCE

Of the 484 newly hired administrators, 334 transitioned from non-administrative roles within the state educator workforce. Approximately three-quarters were hired within the same district in which they previously worked.



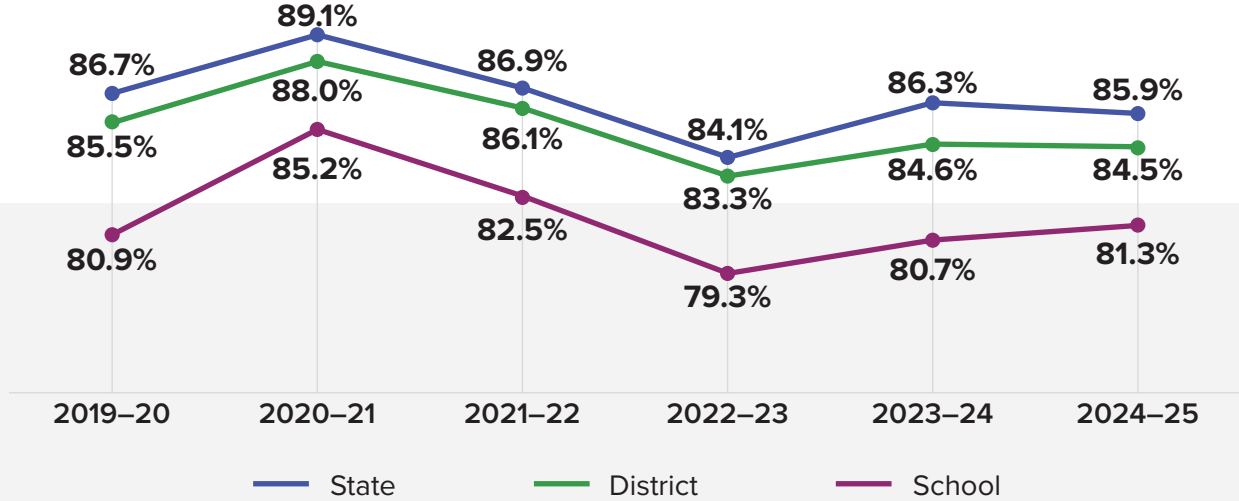
EXPERIENCE AND AGE AT HIRE

Administrators entering positions from outside the state workforce had more years of prior experience on average than internal entrants (17.6 versus 15.7 years) and were older at the time of hire (a mean age of 46.5 versus 41.5 years). Those entering from within the workforce were more heavily concentrated in younger age groups.



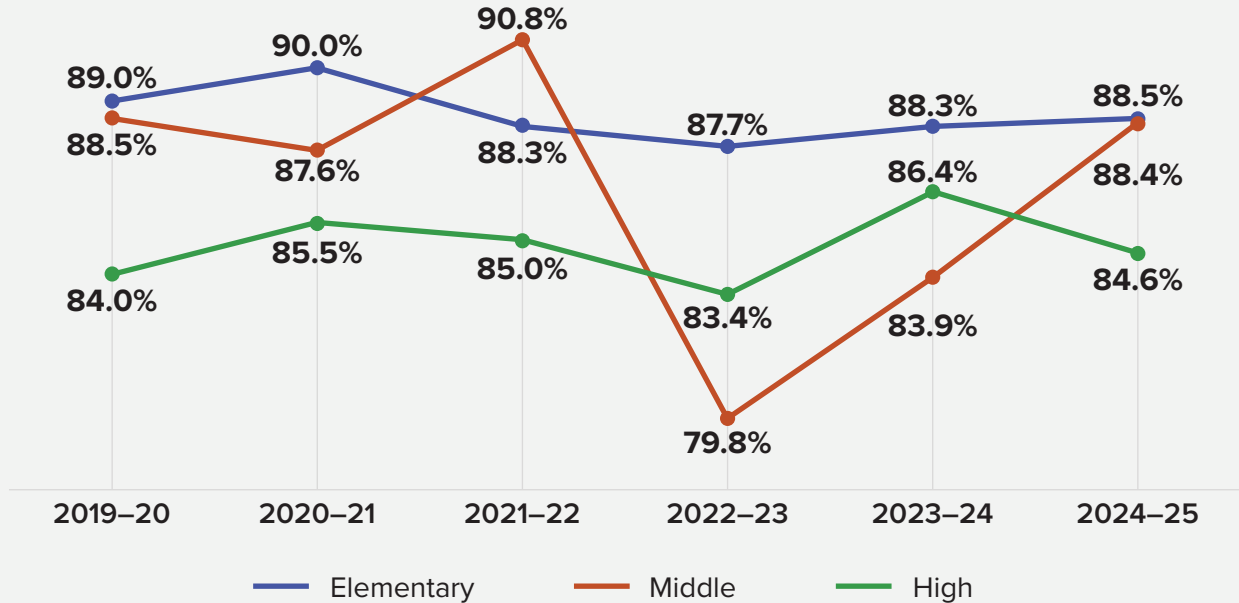
Principal Retention Trends in South Carolina

One-year retention rates were examined at the state, district, and school levels from 2019–20 through 2024–25. Retention declined across all three levels following the onset of the pandemic and rebounded in subsequent years. State-level principal retention was consistently 1–2 percentage points less than teacher retention, likely reflecting the older age profile of the principal workforce.



ACROSS ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS

State-level principal retention rates were also examined separately for elementary, middle, and high schools. Over most of the period examined, high school principals were less likely to remain in the state workforce than elementary and middle school principals, consistent with national findings. Middle school principal retention showed the sharpest decline of the three levels, dropping from 90.8% in 2021–22 to 79.8% in 2022–23, before rebounding strongly in subsequent years. By 2024–25, retention rates across all three organizational levels had reached prepandemic levels, ranging from 84.6% to 88.5%.



Policy Considerations

INVEST IN THE LEADERSHIP PIPELINE

With approximately 85% of newly hired administrators entering as assistant principals and most transitioning from within the state educator workforce, supporting structured leadership development pathways for aspiring administrators may strengthen the supply of future principals.

MONITOR PRINCIPAL RETENTION

Principal retention has largely rebounded following pandemic-era declines but varies across state, district, and school levels. Continued monitoring of retention patterns, particularly at the school level, can help identify where leadership stability may need additional attention.

LEVERAGE INTERNAL TALENT

Three-quarters of newly hired administrators from within the state educator workforce were hired within their same districts. Intentional mentoring and internal promotion practices at the district level may support a more experienced and stable local leadership pipeline.

Summary and Next Steps

The South Carolina Administrator Workforce Profile for 2024–25 offers a detailed description of the state’s public school principals and assistant principals, focusing on personal demographics, professional attributes, patterns of workforce entry, and principal retention trends. The administrator workforce is predominantly female and more racially diverse than the teacher workforce, with meaningful differences in age, experience, and educational attainment between principals and assistant principals. Most newly hired administrators entered as assistant principals and transitioned from within the state educator workforce, with a large majority accepting positions within their own districts. Principal retention remained relatively stable over the 6 years examined, with declines related to the pandemic largely reversing in subsequent years. SC TEACHER’s June 2026 report analyzes the results of the state’s first survey on school administrator working conditions, complementing this profile by examining principals’ and assistant principals’ experiences on the job.

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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.