

Profile of the South Carolina Teacher Workforce for 2018-2019

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University of South Carolina | September 2020

South Carolina, along with the rest of the United States, is facing a K-12 teacher shortage crisis. To address teacher shortages in South Carolina, it is important to understand the current landscape of the teacher workforce. While such datasets exist at the national level, until recently, there was no South Carolina-centric database. The South Carolina Teacher Education Advancement Consortium through Higher Education Research (SC-TEACHER) Center is developing a South Carolina-centric longitudinal data system to contribute to an understanding of statewide issues of teacher turnover, while reconciling innovative efforts from across the state to better ascertain the impact those efforts are having in addressing teacher recruitment and retention.

This study was conducted to define the landscape of the South Carolina K-12 teacher workforce that examined key demographics of the teachers as well as the geographic context of the schools in which they teach and the socioeconomic context comparing various teacher demographics by the poverty level in which the schools were situated. Data were provided for South Carolina certified staff from the South Carolina Department of Education, publicly available information for the South Carolina school report card for 2018-2019, and the 2017-2018 school year data from the National Center for Education Statistics.

This study addressed these research questions:

- What are characteristics of the South Carolina teaching population considering personal demographics, teacher preparation and experience, and teacher evaluation results? How do these characteristics compare with teachers nationally for available variables?
- How do teacher characteristics (personal demographics, teacher preparation and experience, and teacher evaluation results) compare between rural and urban schools in South Carolina?
- How do teacher characteristics (personal demographics, teacher preparation and experience, and teacher evaluation results) compare between relatively high and low poverty schools in South Carolina?

Key Findings

- Compared to national data, South Carolina had more Black teachers, fewer Hispanic teachers, more female teachers, more teachers with advanced degrees, and lower average teacher salary.
- The percentage of teachers of color in South Carolina is under representative of the student population suggesting the need for a focus on diversity in recruitment efforts for teacher preparation programs.
- Considering differences between schools in rural and urban locations of the state, rural schools tend to have teachers with more teaching experience, lower teacher performance on the assessment portion of the state teaching evaluation, and employ more international teachers than urban schools.
- Comparing higher and lower poverty schools in the state, higher poverty schools tend to have more Black teachers, fewer White teachers, lower teacher salary, more international teachers, and fewer National Board certified teachers than lower poverty schools.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is the first of its kind to provide a profile of the South Carolina teacher workforce. With the commission of the SC-TEACHER Center, a South Carolina-centric database was developed. Thus, this newly developed database allowed for the variables identified in this study to be examined and presented. The database also will allow for subsequent variables and relationships of interest to the field of education to be examined and presented, all with South Carolina-centric data.

- Data received from the South Carolina Department of Education represent about half the number of teachers reported by South Carolina. Data were provided in multiple files and some files had missing teacher identification numbers and/or names. Future data collection should attempt to resolve issues of missing identification variables to ensure representation of the full population of South Carolina teachers.
- National data were from a different school year from the South Carolina data. National data were from the 2017-2018 for school year, and South Carolina data were from the 2018-2019 school year. Using data from the same school year would improve the validity of comparisons.
- Given the growing presence of alternative certification programs in South Carolina, a more extensive examination of these programs is needed to determine their impact on student achievement and diversity of the teacher workforce, as well as addressing recruitment and retention challenges.
- A rigorous study of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification and teacher effectiveness is needed. This could shed much-needed light on the value of teachers with National Board certification, and thus might allow policymakers to make better informed decisions regarding incentives.

ABOUT SC-TEACHER

The South Carolina Teacher Education Advancement Consortium through Higher Education Research (SC-TEACHER) is funded by the Commission on Higher Education as a Center for Excellence. SC-TEACHER will examine the broad landscape of teacher recruitment, preparation, and retention practices in South Carolina—and build and deploy a state-centric, longitudinal database system to understand statewide issues and best practices for establishing protocols and to maintain a data infrastructure necessary to answer key questions posed by policymakers and practitioners. SC-TEACHER’s work will inform educator preparation programs, serve as an education research resource center, and provide evidence of effective teaching practices.

For more information, visit www.sc-teacher.org