The Future of South Carolina's Teaching Profession

Addressing Teacher Shortages & Accelerating Student-Led Learning

NOVEMBER 2022

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with assistance from Zachary Arms, Adam Barnes, Adam Brown, Michael Burgess, Tammiee Dickensen, Chanda Jefferson, Stephanie Johnson, Amy Medina, Veronica Thomas, and Joshua Watts
Acknowledgments

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In addition, we thank Tommy Hodges, Dean of the College of Education, who worked closely with us in conceptualizing the project and offered erudite edits. Merritt Jones assisted in our initial data gathering, and we are proud she is now teaching in the Charleston County School District. We also thank Reba Campbell and Kristen Horne for their advice in penning our findings and Sophie Bello for her always graceful design contributions to our report.

This research and development project was supported through a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York – one of the nation’s leading philanthropies that invests in research and development efforts that prepare all students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need to participate in democracy and thrive in the global economy fully. We are very grateful for the support from LaVerne Evans Srinivasan, Vice President for Education at the Corporation, who offered us sage advice and asked us difficult questions. LaVerne is one of the nation’s thought leaders in fostering integrated approaches to innovation and learning in the field of education.

The ideas voiced herein are those of the authors and not those of our funders or reviewers.

About ALL4SC

ALL4SC (Accelerating Learning and Leadership for South Carolina) brings together University of South Carolina assets to support cradle-to-career lifetime learners who have the academic and life skills to take full advantage of choices and options that allow them to fully contribute to their communities. In addition, ALL4SC supports transforming the teaching profession while informing policies for a system of whole child education.

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The real challenge, as we document more fully with this report, is the nature of the teaching job. The challenges facing the education profession will require a shift in mindsets around the role of teachers and administrators. It will require significant technical and policy changes in how educators are prepared, utilized, recognized, and rewarded. It will require a deeper understanding of teacher working conditions, new ways to capitalize on South Carolina’s many expert teachers, as well as strategic work that is currently underway.
The Imperative for Evolving South Carolina’s Teaching Profession

Hardly a day goes by without another headline about the challenges facing our nation’s teachers. A June 2022 RAND study found that nearly three-fourths of America’s teachers and 85 percent of principals are experiencing frequent job-related stress – compared to just a third of working adults.1

The same is true in South Carolina, home to over 730,000 students and 55,000 teachers. A November 2022 report from CERRA found over 1,400 unfilled teaching jobs in the state. In a recent SC-TEACHER survey of departing teachers from 8 sample SC school districts in the spring of 2022, more than 60% of the state’s teachers reported that they mostly or always feel used up by the end of the workday and feel emotionally drained from their work. About half the teachers reported feeling fatigued about going to work and feeling burned out from their work most of the time or always.2

TABLE 1: The 2021-22 SC-TEACHER Exit Survey
Responses of departing teachers from a sample of 8 SC school districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of job related emotional distress</th>
<th>% of teachers in each category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel used up at the end of the workday.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About half the time</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel emotionally drained from my work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About half the time</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About half the time</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel burned out from my work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About half the time</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel frustrated by my job.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About half the time</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I am working too hard on my job.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About half the time</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel like I’m at the end of my rope.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About half the time</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with people all day is really a strain for me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About half the time</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working directly with people puts too much stress on me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About half the time</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SC-TEACHER (2022)

At the same time, the news media often blares headlines on how our state’s public schools face worsening teacher shortages. The same is true nationally. As a 2022 study pointed out, the lack of good data often obscures the extent of shortages, where they occur, and the reasons why teachers leave their jobs.3 The headlines often mask district officials’ and teachers’ evidence and challenges.
Low teacher salaries are often assumed to be the root cause of the educator exodus. Professional salaries immensely attract talented individuals who have not considered teaching as their initial career. The same goes for those who enter the classroom but later learn they cannot financially afford to remain in the teaching profession. However, there is more to the story – borne out by national research and our recent studies of departing teachers in South Carolina.

For example, this past year, for South Carolina teachers who left the classroom, “school discipline” problems were cited as one of the most critical reasons for departing.

### TABLE 2: The 2021-22 SC-TEACHER Exit Survey
Responses of departing teachers from a sample of 8 SC school districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons cited as greatest importance for leaving position</th>
<th>% of teachers in each category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because school discipline problems were an issue during the most recent school year.</td>
<td>29 12 14 15 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of other personal life reasons (e.g., health, pregnancy/childcare, caring for family).</td>
<td>39 10 12 17 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because I wanted to take a job more conveniently located OR because I moved.</td>
<td>47 5 10 10 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of other factors not included elsewhere.</td>
<td>57 14 7 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because I was dissatisfied with the administration during the most recent school year.</td>
<td>39 15 13 11 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because I wanted or needed a higher salary.</td>
<td>47 8 13 15 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because I felt there were too many intrusions on my teaching time during the most recent school year.</td>
<td>43 12 15 13 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because I was dissatisfied with workplace conditions (e.g., facilities, classroom resources, school safety) during the most...</td>
<td>48 12 14 9 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because I was dissatisfied with the lack of influence I had over school policies and practices during the most recent school year.</td>
<td>46 12 15 11 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SC-TEACHER (2022)

The pandemic has wreaked havoc on everyone, including many children whose lives are filled with trauma to which schools are not fully designed to respond. In a Post & Courier article, for example, Mary Sue Worthy, 2021 Teacher of the Year at Stratford High School in Berkeley County School District, reported unmanageable workloads and more tasks and responsibilities piled on top of teachers.

“I tell people I retired (at age 55) because the camel is tired of carrying more straws... You can’t keep adding straws... Now, we’re supposed to be able to diagnose these mental health issues to make sure that the kids want to be in the classroom and that they show up.”
As one South Carolina principal told us:

“Student behavior is more challenging than ever and very demanding on teachers and administrators. It is changing the work of educators and is very challenging. It is affecting teacher well-being and burnout. Attention must be paid to more comprehensive solutions [in and out of schools] to address these issues for students, their families, and teachers.

Teacher well-being and job satisfaction influence teacher retention. Our recent exit survey found that 4 in 10 teachers in the sample districts left their current school district and moved to another district. Many teachers cited administrative leadership and vision in their new school district as the top reason for making this lateral move.5

Salaries matter as well. Based on our recent exit survey of South Carolina teachers, 80 percent of those who left the profession cited salary as the main factor in considering a return to the classroom. Working conditions matter too. The survey also revealed that 62 percent of the teachers pointed to the need for a strong administrative team and collegial support for them to return to the classroom. Another 6 in 10 also noted “other factors” not listed – reminding us of the complexities of retaining South Carolina’s teachers.

TABLE 3: The 2021-22 SC-TEACHER Exit Survey
Responses of departing teachers from a sample of 8 SC school districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance of factors in considering a return to teaching</th>
<th>% of teachers in each category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An increase in salary</td>
<td>6 4 11 20 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stronger administrative and/or collegial support for my work</td>
<td>20 7 11 17 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other factors</td>
<td>31 3 6 9 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller class sizes</td>
<td>11 13 17 27 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of full-time teaching positions</td>
<td>19 7 18 24 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgiveness of your student loans</td>
<td>50 2 7 9 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of part-time teaching positions</td>
<td>46 7 15 16 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing incentives</td>
<td>56 7 12 7 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of suitable child care options</td>
<td>64 7 5 6 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SC-TEACHER (2022)

“The work we’re going to have to do [for the teaching profession] is things outside the budget and outside of salaries.”

– Speaker of the House Murrell Smith (R-Sumter)
Teacher shortages are not a new phenomenon; neither are calls to transform the teaching profession. High teacher attrition rates and shortages nearly always occur more in schools serving high-need students, further deepening inequality in academic outcomes.6 Too often, policy solutions do not attend to the root causes of the problems that need to be solved.

Addressing teacher supply, demand, and quality is a complex matter. Studies show that recruiting and retaining teachers requires a mix of incentives and conducive working conditions. Studies point to the importance of opportunities for peer collaboration and authentic teacher-led learning and leadership as driving forces for both higher retention rates among those who teach and improved student and school performance.7 In addition, an international study found that principals’ leadership and management approaches significantly impacted teachers’ capacity to cope with changes and challenges in the classroom.8 Just like the diverse needs of students, one size will not fit all. Solutions will likely require multiple elements ranging from better compensation to a teacher-team-based approach to school transformation.9

The real challenge, as we document more fully with this report, is the nature of the teaching job. The challenges facing the education profession will require a shift in mindsets around the role of teachers and administrators. It will require significant technical and policy changes in how educators are prepared, utilized, recognized, and rewarded. It will require a deeper understanding of teacher working conditions, new ways to capitalize on South Carolina’s many expert teachers, as well as strategic work that is currently underway.

Meaningful Efforts are Underway

South Carolina has made several significant efforts to support advances in the teaching profession. Describing all of them is beyond this project’s scope. However, several came up consistently in our conversations with district officials.

Most prominently, South Carolina is home to several nationally-recognized innovations in teacher recruitment. These include (but are not limited to) the South Carolina Teacher Cadet Program, a yearlong dual-credit, college-level course established in the late 1980s and led by CERRA to encourage high school students to learn about and consider teaching as a career. CERRA also established ProTeam for middle school students – and continues to improve the Cadet experience – now offering two courses for young people to consider teaching as a career. The Cadet program and Clemson University’s Call Me MISTER program, designed to increase the pool of highly effective Black educators, are profiled in a compendium of evidence-based best teacher recruitment practices in America.10

* CERRA is the state’s long-standing teacher recruitment and retention center, housed at Winthrop University.
Also, since 1999, the General Assembly has funded the South Carolina Teaching Fellows Program to recruit talented high school seniors into the teaching profession by offering them up to $24,000 in college tuition for their preparation in exchange for teaching in the state’s public schools – one year in the classroom for every year receiving the Fellowship.

Fewer policies exist to support teacher retention. However, the General Assembly also recognizes National Board Certified Teachers with an annual supplement of $5000 – and a study led by CERRA showed that South Carolina NBCTs are far more likely to remain in teaching than their non-NBCT peers. However, as we point out later, South Carolina is home to over 9300 NBCTs, third-ranked in the nation, but no state strategy is in place to capitalize on their leadership.

In addition, often with support from the SC Legislature and the SC Department of Education, school districts and universities invest in professional development school partnerships as well as teaching residencies, new teacher induction initiatives, competency-based alternative pathways into teaching, and, more recently, educator-led personalized and performance-based professional learning via micro-credentials. Some of these initiatives are new; others are not well studied and documented.

The SCDE has also, with its partner, the Center for Teaching Quality, supported the development of collective leadership strategies among 24 schools where teachers and principals learn to lead together. As Molly Spearman, current State Superintendent of Education, said, “Teachers can’t lead without collaboration and support from principals, and principals can’t embrace this work without support and collaboration from superintendents.” (We discuss more of these innovations in the context of our findings.)

The General Assembly has invested upwards of $11 million annually in a Rural Recruitment Initiative over the last six years. Despite documented expenditures, little is known about the impact and return on investment. For example, $7.3 million was spent on the RRI in FY22, with over $1.9 million in fees paid to external organizations to bring international teachers to SC classrooms and over $1.1 million on critical needs stipends. However, as one HR director told us:

“School districts in South Carolina have had an infusion of money for recruitment and retention, but we do not have a strategy yet on how to use those dollars in ways that are best for the state. My board wants to know if these initiatives we have discussed for many years work. If they work, they want to fund them. We do not know much about using the $9M or so we spend on these high-need school recruitment dollars.

Much more needs to be known, which is why we undertook this research and development project.
Our Research and Development Project

Over the last year, the University of South Carolina and SC-TEACHER, with discretionary grant support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, has led a research and development effort on three fronts:

1. Assess the human capital assets and needs of three school district partners, the root causes of the teacher shortages, and their readiness for the redesign of the teaching profession;
2. Identify several innovations in educator development from across the United States and the globe that can spur the small steps that lead to a big change in South Carolina; and
3. Develop a preliminary policy framework for creating a more coherent system of professional learning and teacher leadership that can inform innovation and legislative action.

In late October 2021, we began working with district administrators from the three school districts and highly accomplished educators across South Carolina. Our mission was to document the use of people, programs, and resources to recruit, prepare, induct, evaluate, develop, and compensate teachers and utilize them as leaders. We worked closely with Human Resource directors to understand the policies and practices that impact local teachers’ supply, demand, and quality. (See Appendix A for the documentation process “grid” we used.)

The three districts represent, in large part, some of the diversity of school communities across South Carolina: Charleston, a blend of rural, urban, and suburban; Fairfield, small and rural; and Pickens, mid-sized, with rural and suburban features.

The official state report card and other available agency data files offer a broad-based profile of the South Carolina teacher (e.g., demographics, teacher characteristics) – such as teaching experience, degrees earned, certification status, average salaries, evaluation ratings – and several items from the current statewide school climate survey. (See Profile of Teachers developed from the University of South Carolina’s REM Center based on readily available data on the following pages.)
Snapshot Profiles of Teachers: Charleston, Fairfield, and Pickens

CHARLESTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Fall 2021

Total number of students: 48,330
Student teacher ratio: 23.4:1
Per pupil expenditures: $12,025
Pupils in poverty: 51%

Student and Teacher Demographics

Teacher Characteristics

Education Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Charleston</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors Plus 18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Plus 30</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certification Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Charleston</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher Evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Charleston</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Met evaluation criteria</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLO rating: Exemplary</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLO rating: Proficient</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Teacher Characteristics

Retained from previous year: 89%
National Board-Certified teachers: 7%
Median years of experience: 10
Average teacher salary: $54,448
**FAIRFIELD COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Fall 2021**

- Total number of students: **2,400**
- Student teacher ratio: **16.5:1**
- Per pupil expenditures: **$18,955**
- Pupils in poverty: **88%**

**Student and Teacher Demographics**

- Female: Teachers 74% | Students 49%
- Male: Teachers 26% | Students 51%
- Black/African-American: Teachers 64% | Students 85%
- White: Teachers 25% | Students 10%
- Hispanic or Latino: Teachers 3% | Students 3%
- Asian: Teachers 5% | Students 0.4%
- All other racial groups: Teachers 2% | Students 2%

**Teacher Characteristics**

**Education Level**

- Bachelors: State 27% | Fairfield 6%
- Bachelors Plus 18: State 6% | Fairfield 42%
- Masters: State 20% | Fairfield 20%
- Masters Plus 30: State 4% | Fairfield 4%
- Doctorate: State 2% | Fairfield 0%

**Certification Type**

- Professional: State 73% | Fairfield 73%
- Initial: State 11% | Fairfield 11%
- Alternative: State 4% | Fairfield 4%
- International: State 12% | Fairfield 12%
- Other: State 0% | Fairfield 0%

**School Environment**

- Satisfied with learning environment: Teachers 96% | Students 85% | Parents 84%
- Satisfied with social and physical environment: Teachers 96% | Students 86% | Parents 80%
- Satisfied with school-home relations: Teachers 82% | Students 82% | Parents 76%

**Teacher Evaluations**

- Met evaluation criteria: State 96% | Fairfield 96%
- SLO rating: Exemplary: State 13% | Fairfield 13%
- SLO rating: Proficient: State 78% | Fairfield 78%

**Other Teacher Characteristics**

- Retained from previous year: **93%**
- National Board-Certified teachers: **4%**
- Median years of experience: **10**
- Average teacher salary: **$55,696**
### School District of Pickens County

#### Fall 2021

- **Total number of students:** 15,685
- **Student teacher ratio:** 24.8:1
- **Per pupil expenditures:** $9,234
- **Pupils in poverty:** 60%

### Student and Teacher Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African-American</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other racial groups</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### School Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied with learning environment</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied with social and physical environment</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied with school-home relations</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Teacher Characteristics

#### Education Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Pickens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors Plus 18</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Plus 30</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Certification Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Pickens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

#### Teacher Evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Pickens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Met evaluation criteria</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLO rating: Exemplary</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLO rating: Proficient</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Other Teacher Characteristics

- Retained from previous year: 92%
- National Board-Certified teachers: 8%
- Median years of experience: 12
- Average teacher salary: $51,649
In all three districts, over half of the teachers have advanced degrees. The vast majority are certified, but Fairfield has a considerably smaller percentage with full certification. Well over 90 percent of teachers meet the state’s teaching evaluation standards. While a far smaller percentage of teachers meet the highest ratings on the student learning objectives, most teachers, students, and parents report being satisfied with learning environments, social and physical environments, and home-school relationships. Differences appear between the districts, but it is unknown if they are statistically significant. If they are, what do those differences in data mean for teachers and the students and parents they teach and serve?

District officials with whom we worked sought better data in making evidence-based staffing decisions. Each year district officials have to figure out how to pay for various competing academic priorities while juggling how to pay for many different types of educators and associated costs (e.g., step increases on the salary schedule, increases in health insurance and employer retirement costs, etc.).

Before the pandemic, according to one SC Department of Education source document, South Carolina had approximately 87,000 certified K-12 educators – including more than 42,000 classroom teachers, 1,200 principals, 1,900 assistant principals, 2,300 school counselors, 1,100 media specialists, and other professionally certified educators (e.g., instructional coaches and supervisors).

Plus, some districts invest in social workers, and now, with new investments from the SC General Assembly, all schools have the funds to hire school nurses (although schools struggle to find nurses as every county in the state has a shortage of them). With the availability of ESSER Funds, school districts could hire various tutors and other allied professionals. We also saw how these three districts began using different personnel and professional learning dollars and other sources of funds to support teacher development.

For example, consider these eight innovations underway in Charleston, Fairfield, and Pickens:

1. Repurposing existing “substitute dollars” for hiring and utilizing well-qualified teachers in flexible positions for each of the district’s schools;

2. Utilizing different funding sources to hire teachers in hybrid roles so they can teach and lead;

3. Using highly skilled teachers who can effectively teach in virtual learning environments to teach students in different schools;

4. Creating a “teacher village” that offers affordable and attractive housing and professional fellowship for educators and their families so they can live in the community in which they teach;

5. Experimenting with local universities in developing teacher residencies supported by non-permanent grant funding, and the use of teaching interns as part of a school’s staff;
6. Developing and maintaining “grow your own” programs to recruit diverse teachers from local communities (including paraprofessionals);

7. Providing differential pay based on supply and demand related to certification fields and school needs; and

8. Establishing a global partnership with the University of Oulu in Finland to develop and implement a “broader view of what successful teaching and learning looks like for the future of education in South Carolina.”

The more we learned from our district partners, the more we realized that many more important innovations in teacher development were underway in these three school systems and many more in the state – and they, too, needed to be documented and better understood. At the same time, we realized that South Carolina had minimal data on its teaching profession. Beginning in November 2021, we enhanced our documentation and interpretations by working with approximately 100 South Carolina educators and policy leaders who offered important insights and advice.

First, in collaboration with CERRA, the team worked with the SC Teacher Forum – each year comprised of the current district teachers of the year – at their annual conference. Sixty-seven district teachers of the year engaged in focus group interviews over an entire day. Their insights led the team to work more closely with eight of the state’s most outstanding teachers who served as formal advisors to the project (see bios in Appendix C).

Second, we also worked closely with 12 outstanding principals, led by two highly regarded former South Carolina school superintendents who also served as advisors to the project.

Finally, the project established an informal statewide advisory group of 20 educators and policy leaders (e.g., those with the State Department of Education and professional associations, as well as legislative staff) who informed our work and offered us advice individually and in two small-group virtual meetings throughout the 9-month investigation.

This report intends to help South Carolina policymakers, education leaders, and practitioners better understand how the state can build on existing innovations and assets in rethinking the role of teachers and creating a system of teacher development that addresses the challenges facing the profession in the state.

We must offer an important caveat. The data and evidence, as well as insights and recommendations, are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive. The purpose of the project is to jumpstart the building of a South Carolina roadmap for evolving the profession, building from sound research evidence and the insights and experiences of teachers and administrators from our state.

Next, we describe the most salient findings drawing on the experiences of our district partners, insights from South Carolina educators, and research evidence.
Major Findings

The SC Teaching Profession: What Is and What Could Be

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>What Is</th>
<th>What Could Be</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruitment</strong></td>
<td>School districts expanded recruitment efforts, but little is known about what is working</td>
<td>Evaluation to improve recruitment and retention policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Induction</strong></td>
<td>School districts have induction programs but are too focused on the 4.0 evaluation rubric and have been described as “cookie cutter”</td>
<td>Customized induction to the work of new teachers, built-in time for mentoring, use of virtual network to access expertise anytime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Learning</strong></td>
<td>PD is not always aligned with teacher needs; instructional coaches, who do not teach, may not have needed skills and “legitimacy” with teachers</td>
<td>Redefining professional learning that is guided by teachers and led by them; expanding to routine collaboration within the workday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Teacher evaluations are too often experienced as compliance rather than growth and sharing expertise</td>
<td>Teacher evaluation reconceptualized as a tool for improvement and peer learning, fueled in part by micro-credentials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
<td>No clear professional pathway for teacher advancement that includes leadership and compensation trajectory without leaving the classroom</td>
<td>Expanding and creating roles for teacher leaders with compensation tied to advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compensation</strong></td>
<td>Single salary schedules built on tradition, not supply/demand, not aligned to cost of living increases</td>
<td>Base salary competitive with those of similar professions and salary increases and supplements based on expanded roles, expertise, accomplishment</td>
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</table>
Recruitment and Preparation

Across the nation the supply of teachers has dwindled. For example, between 2008 and 2019, the number of students completing traditional teacher education programs in the U.S. dropped by more than a third. The number of students completing teacher preparation programs has declined in nearly every state, including South Carolina, while alternative preparation programs have seen an uptick in enrollments.

Each of our three district partners faces shortages of teachers and draws on a range of local, state, and federal funds to attract and retain the classroom experts they need. The challenges appeared to be greater in Charleston and Fairfield than in Pickens. Nevertheless, they all have struggled to recruit and retain teachers in different ways:

1. In Charleston, the challenges appeared to be mostly the high cost of living in an international destination, as well as the lack of preparation for teaching in high-need schools;
2. In Fairfield, the challenges appeared to be the lack of adequate housing for educators who are needed to both live and teach in a low-income community; and
3. In Pickens, the challenges appeared to be increasing retirements and dropping enrollments in nearby teacher education programs – but the district is one of the very few in the state without a teacher shortage despite not having the highest salaries in their region.

All three districts have expanded their recruiting efforts accordingly. More funds are spent on recruitment – although it was challenging to collect common data on exactly how much was spent on recruiting activities.

Charleston offers financial incentives to teachers who teach in their “Acceleration Schools,” which serve the highest-need students in the districts. Building from its Top Talent program, these schools function as their learning community with additional support from the district. Fairfield spends money on bringing international teachers to the district and offering signing and retention bonuses. All three are working on recruiting and preparing teachers in alternative ways that lower costs and increase the teacher workforce’s quality and diversity.

Despite targeted state funding distributed through the CERRA, district officials did not fully understand what policies and programs work and which do not. While better salaries are deeply needed, teachers indicated that effective recruitment should also place a premium on increasing respect for

“Teaching the whole child means knowing children and their families. About 75 percent of our staff live in nearby counties. Even when they want to be a part of your community, they can’t be a part of our community because there’s not suitable, available housing.”

- JR Green, Superintendent, Fairfield
the profession — from their local school boards and administrators, the State Department of Education, the Education Oversight Committee, and the SC General Assembly. As one teacher told us:

“ I want to feel valued professionally. A thousand dollars more or less a year does not make much difference for many of us. Feeling valued professionally and respected matters a lot.

District officials agreed. However, they also expressed concerns regarding a range of disconnected recruitment, preparation, and retention efforts in the state. For example, one district official pointed to the Teacher Cadet program that encourages high school students to consider teaching as a career — yet what seemed to be lacking was a pipeline of experiences, incentives, and support to move Cadets seamlessly to college and into the induction period of teaching as a fully licensed educator.

“As a former Teacher Cadet and Teaching Fellow, I would love to have stronger partnerships and avenues to get current Cadets and Fellows into the profession. Participating in both programs strengthened my desire to be an educator, and South Carolina could capitalize more on these programs to recruit quality individuals into the profession.”

- Lesley Snyder, middle school English teacher, 2021 Milken Educator Award Winner

Other administrators called for a new process for qualifying high school students to become Teacher Cadets, which currently requires a GPA/GPR of at least 3.0 on a 4-point scale and/or receive a recommendation from the Review Panel. They hope to attract high school students who are not traditional honor roll students but have the potential to succeed in college and develop into teachers. They also expressed concern that they often “see high school students sign up for the Cadet course to get a GPA boost,” and not because they are planning to major in education.

District leaders also lamented the state’s entry requirements for teaching as barriers to recruiting new teachers to vacant classrooms. The ETS PRAXIS exam – particularly the standardized test of subject matter knowledge of a teacher’s certification area – was identified as the wrong hurdle teachers needed to clear to earn a license. As one principal noted, “We have a top-notch Algebra teacher whose students earn the highest scores on the district EOC exams, but she has struggled to pass the PRAXIS because of the section on Calculus.” Each district leader wanted to find another test or consider waiving the testing requirement based on proficient performance or verifying readiness for effective teaching. The SCDE has been working on addressing these issues by creating the “Alternate Plan” route to full certification initiated in August 2022.

Charleston has over 600 paraprofessionals who could become teachers. The district has instituted a program, Teach Charleston, their own “homegrown pathway to teacher certification” at no cost. While the district has seen classified employees (paraprofessionals) join this program to become teachers, the majority of candidates are external hires.

All districts reported the need for more robust financial incentives for “paras” who earn, on average, about $24,000 a year. These incentives would support their development as teachers, including covering the cost of childcare while they work and attend classes to earn their teaching
license. Charleston officials noted that because of the district’s size, it has resources that other districts do not have – and there should be ways to “share the wealth” with other districts. We learned that each of these three districts was eager to develop and deploy regional and statewide recruitment strategies – and in doing so – lessen the need to compete with each other for teachers and principals.

Each district works with local universities to develop a pool of candidates. However, we found little evidence of any coordination between the school system and their university partners in recruiting and preparing new teachers for the demands of teaching today and tomorrow.

As one district official noted:

“The district has relationships with teacher preparation providers, and teachers and others participate in advisory committees. However, there is no consistent dialogue and collaboration to fine-tune teacher preparation or to create innovations that might include more realistic and practical learning opportunities for prospective teachers in teacher preparation programs.

With better coordination between school districts and higher education, teacher recruitment and preparation should start with Teacher Cadet programs in high school and be part of a comprehensive and well-coordinated plan. Such a plan would include options for dual credit courses and seamlessly transition into a teacher education program at a nearby college.

In some ways, the state is already moving in this direction with the recent launch of TEACH South Carolina – a partnership between the South Carolina Department of Education and TEACH, a non-profit organization founded by the U.S. Department of Education, as well as The Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement – with a mission to help people consider teaching and enter the profession.

The University of South Carolina has established CarolinaCAP – a non-degree, competency-based, alternative route pathway that dramatically increased the diversity and quality of new teachers in some of South Carolina's highest-need schools.

However, while recruiting talent to teach is one thing, ensuring that the talent is prepared to teach and develop students in ways defined by the Profile of the SC Graduate is another matter altogether.
Research points to key elements of effective teacher preparation that lead to higher retention rates: observing successful teachers; receiving regular feedback; participating in intensive clinical practice in a classroom; and taking courses in teaching methods, learning theory, child development, and student assessment.\textsuperscript{15} Many South Carolina educator preparation programs have these elements. Yet innovations in teacher education are often stymied by an array of state, regional, and accreditation requirements.

“The ideal is that every South Carolina student would have a trusted adult that they’re able to go to every day, and there would be flexible time built into the schedule for that relationship to happen.”

- Lesley Snyder, middle school English teacher, 2021 Milken Educator Award Winner

Teachers, especially relatively recent graduates, told us that educator preparation programs need to develop their skills in classroom management and aligning instruction with the state’s teaching standards. However, these same teachers discussed having more difficulty addressing the root causes of maladaptive student behavior. Educators who graduated from our state’s educator preparation programs appeared to be calling for training where they can further develop their pedagogical skills in teaching the whole child.

As one district teacher of the year told us:

“We Teachers coming out of college know how to teach reading, and what they do not know are the kids and the community. We need to prepare and develop new teachers in ways they can learn about their students and communities.

However, teachers reminded us that not every educator could do everything for every student, regardless of their preparation. They talked about how, in the current system, teachers feel expected to be all things to everyone at all times. One teacher said, “The job is so difficult in various ways that it inhibits success.”

In leading a conversation with a large group of SC district teachers, Chanda Jefferson pointed out that “now, more than ever, teachers need to know more about whole child education and students’ experiences and their families, trauma-informed instruction, mental health, culture, and language.”

A district teacher of the year responded:

“This is our responsibility [to respond to the whole child]. It does not matter if [the challenges that students bring to our classroom] did not start as our responsibility. We either rise to that occasion or teach in our classroom and let it happen. We have to have teams of professionals to evaluate and work with these kids, and we cannot do it alone.”
The teachers and administrators of South Carolina seemed to be making the same case – especially in light of the expectations of the Profile of the SC Graduate that calls for students to master knowledge of the basics but also develop skills in creativity, problem-solving, collaboration, and communication. Teachers, in particular, called for more opportunities to work in teams and with other professionals outside of their schools and in the community.
## Recruitment and Preparation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What Is</strong></th>
<th><strong>What Could Be</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are expanded recruitment efforts, but there is little evidence of impact.</td>
<td>Aligning teacher preparation and recruitment in a regional approach that addresses regional supply and demand as well as encouraging school–university–community partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtually all districts face recruitment challenges, but they are most extreme in rural areas.</td>
<td>Accelerating current grow-your-own approaches to teacher recruitment and preparation and aligning the “supply chain” of programs already established in South Carolina – including links between Teacher Cadets, dual enrollment, Teaching Fellows, and internships or residencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-service teachers have too little classroom experience.</td>
<td>Offering extended teacher residencies and co-teaching opportunities for those entering the classroom without extensive clinical training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation programs provide the basics, but have scant focus on the Profile of SC Graduate and whole child education.</td>
<td>Redefining teacher and administrator preparation curriculum to include whole child education, as well as providing strategies for acquiring knowledge and understanding of individual students and the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are ongoing small experiments with retraining current teachers for new roles.</td>
<td>Exploring efforts to retain teachers for shortage areas by redesigning the job of teaching and by developing team teaching, where different educators with differing expertise serve groups of students.</td>
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Induction and Mentoring

Researchers have found that beginning teacher retention depends on the types and number of supports that recruits experience – and getting multiple induction components affected whether novices stayed or left. South Carolina, to its credit, requires all school districts to implement a two-year induction program that includes an assigned mentor. School districts comply with the requirement and often invest far more than what state funding provides. In our interviews with district officials, we learned that much more needs to be known about South Carolina’s approach to new teacher induction and mentoring – although a 2020 SC-TEACHER paper captures important baseline information (see infographic).

In Pickens, a partnership with the University of Oulu has led to a powerful approach to mentoring through virtual professional learning with Finnish educators where novices learn to engage in wellness check-ins for students and themselves. Novice teachers also develop new forms of student assessment, and incorporate outdoor learning that promotes much-needed joyful learning.

However, according to our limited data, many current induction efforts often need to provide more support for novices and the time and compensation for the expert teachers to provide it. We interviewed teachers who referred to their district induction programs as “cookie cutter” or “one-size-fits-all” with an over-emphasis on being ready for evaluation and the 4.0 rubric.

The teachers interviewed talked about induction programs that tended to be once-a-month meetings on set topics that, although well-intentioned, may or may not meet the immediate needs of new teachers. Some new teachers viewed their induction as adding to their workload without much benefit. They called for a more ongoing, flexibly structured, and personalized approach. Teachers and principals called for dispensing with a standardized set of topics in current induction programs, suggesting instead more frequent and timely communication related to more pressing issues.
Some districts are answering in more responsive ways. As one district teacher of the year asserted:

“In our district, we have monthly get-togethers so new teachers can share what is working and what is not – and we utilize district leaders to help in a judgment-free way. It is about support, not evaluation.

South Carolina has exemplar models underway, such as USC’s CarolinaTIP – which has led to exceptional retention rates (97%) among the 250 recruits (in 8 districts) the program currently supports. Hallmarks of CarolinaTIP are that it’s cohort-based with a personalized and customized focus on the whole teacher.

The teachers spoke to several ways that their schools could help them achieve a greater degree of well-being, resist burnout, and stay in the profession longer than they might have otherwise – much like what has been documented nationwide. It is not that districts are unaware of the need for a more comprehensive approach to whole-teacher induction and mentoring. Schools are not designed for teachers to learn from each other. In some cases, mentoring efforts are added to the existing workloads of the mentor teachers on top of their already packed teaching schedules.

While districts have flexibility in their induction (or ADEPT) plans, many appear to focus primarily on the 4.0 teaching rubric. Similarly, new teachers find it challenging to work outside the regular school day with a mentor. Sessions after school consume time that many need to spend planning lessons, grading student work, and even working moonlight jobs to help make financial ends meet.

Even in cases like Pickens, which has instituted a more comprehensive mentoring approach that pays dividends for teacher retention and more effective teaching, mentors are not paid a professional stipend for their expertise. Mentors are paid a modest $500 stipend for the entire year with the expectation of spending about three hours per week on the work. The time adds up to 108 hours across an academic year resulting in a little less than $5 per hour. The budget for more is just not available.

Teachers suggested creating an “official” mentoring time in the schedules of mentors and mentees and holding that time sacrosanct (much like in Singapore, as discussed more later). They also pointed to the importance of matching mentors and mentees in content and personality or potentially pairing teachers with several mentors.

As one district teacher of the year shared:

“My mentor was a retired kindergarten teacher when I was a new high school teacher. She was excellent, but could not help me teach my subject to my students.”
Teachers talked about the need for more than one mentor, and wondered how they could create more frequent opportunities to learn from colleagues. They also pointed out that mentoring can work well – but too often, incorporating mentoring into a teacher’s busy schedule is a challenge to administrators and teachers alike.

Another teacher leader said:

“More needs to be done to support the mentoring process in ways the state and General Assembly can see the benefits of an experienced mentor and invest in the kinds of support new teachers need – not checklists, but opportunities to co-teach with other types of teachers.

### Induction and Mentoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Is</th>
<th>What Could Be</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Induction is overly focused on SC’s teacher evaluation 4.0 rubric</td>
<td>Refocusing the statewide induction model on the “whole teacher” and providing more customized support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induction is described as cookie cutter and one size fits all despite differences in inductees needs</td>
<td>Creating a new teacher professional learning community that serves the diverse needs of new recruits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors and mentees struggle to find time to work together since mentoring relationships are typically in addition to ongoing classroom responsibilities.</td>
<td>Establishing formalized, protected time for induction activities in mentor and mentee work schedules and paying mentors for their time and expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New teachers seek a range of mentors with varied expertise</td>
<td>Reducing reliance on full-time coaches and mentors and increasing the use of hybrid teaching roles to expand the number and expertise of mentors</td>
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</table>
South Carolina requires school districts to build five professional development days into their calendars. In addition, most educators earn hours through college courses, training, and varied professional experiences. Often this can result in a one-shot, large group, disjointed professional learning that is rarely followed by the time and coaching needed to put the knowledge into practice.

Research shows professional learning can lead to shifts in teachers’ skills and instructional practice and significantly improve student achievement – under the right conditions. Programs of varying lengths and formats can produce wide-ranging effects depending on how time gets used.17

The interviews suggested that many South Carolina teachers want to grow professionally and want professional education to be ongoing and focused on topics and skills regularly used in their classrooms, schools, and communities. They seek a strong voice in their professional learning and want that learning to come from other teachers with at least one foot in the classroom.

One teacher of the year called for a new approach:

“Most of our professional learning is coming before or after school hours... and that time is spent typically dealing with pacing, reacting to latest state policies, and many other things. And no, we don’t have the valuable time to sit down with each other as teachers and look at student work...or have those conversations that actually will result in student growth.”

- AJ Barnes, Charleston County School District, high school social studies teacher, 2021-22 District Teacher of the Year

One-size PD doesn’t work. Survey the teachers to see what we need. Maybe we don’t need that “ACHIEVE” PD again. We’ve had that five years in a row, and now we need more applicable PDs.

Many teachers said they hoped to have more control over their professional learning. Additionally, teachers desire more recognition for what they have learned in their classrooms and for the resources they have discovered on their own that better support their students. In many ways, Pickens is accelerating this form of professional learning through its “virtual modules,” where teachers choose how they learn and decide what will help them to become more effective in the classroom and as mentors.

South Carolina’s current exploration into using micro-credentials to personalize professional learning for teachers and administrators seemed to be just what teachers and administrators seek. USC’s CarolinaCrED has entered a unique space in building out and hosting its very own micro-credential platform that includes a state-specific variety of micro-credential options, a suite of supports, and reporting capabilities for educators and districts. Most recently, the USC has sparked South Carolina’s involvement in joining a multi-state partnership for accelerating teaching policies in support of teacher-led professional development.
Teachers talked about how, in too many districts, professional development has more of a deficit focus than not. In other words, teacher training sessions rest on the assumption of what teachers do not know as opposed to what they do know.

In one district teacher of the year’s words:

“Most professional development is based on a deficit model – something that’s being done to teachers, not being done with them. We need coaching cultures in our schools for teachers.

Another concluded:

“Too many school systems outsource professional development to outside experts who do not know our students or us.

Expanding the definition and support for professional learning should include setting aside and protecting regular times for teacher collaboration focused on improving practice. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), whether in-person or virtual, need to become commonplace – and driven more by teachers and the student needs that they identify. We learned that virtual professional learning, particularly in light of educators’ recent experience during the pandemic, offers opportunities for regular collaboration across schools and communities, universities, and other professional learning partner organizations.

South Carolina’s approach to evaluating teachers and principals has been evolving to align with the Profile of the SC Graduate. The state requires districts to use its statewide evaluation system (Expanded ADEPT) or a local version that is equivalent and state-approved. South Carolina requires that Expanded ADEPT provide teachers with clear, timely, and valuable feedback. The evaluation process is anchored by the SCTS 4.0 rubric – based on performance standards designed and validated by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching.

Both teachers and principals agreed that teacher evaluation in South Carolina – in general – is “far better than in days before the 4.0.”
As Zach Arms, one of our teacher advisors, observed:

"The current teaching evaluation model in South Carolina is positive in that it walks our younger teachers through planning to the assessment phase of teaching and everything in between. However, it’s kind of a beast, and it takes a lot of work.

The state’s teacher evaluation has been positive for administrators and teachers alike. As one district leader said:

"The state’s teacher evaluation has been positive for administrators and teachers alike. As one district leader said:

The 4.0 rubric has brought about exciting conversations in the district. Evaluation meetings are richer and more frequent, requiring more reflection on everyone’s part. It has to be more than just checking it off but more about conversation and reflection.

However, the teachers interviewed pointed out that teacher evaluation can focus too much on the “score,” and the process in some districts often devolves into a “check the box compliance sort of thing.” Principals agreed and talked of the countless hours spent on evaluating teachers and putting together the documentation required by their performance evaluation with too little benefit. Practical approaches to evaluation include opportunities to discuss goals and progress and provide feedback that is helpful to the individual being reviewed.

As one district teacher of the year suggested:

"We need more informal observations to support one another and see things going on in our classrooms. Instead of how we do teacher evaluation now, we need to invest in authentic professional communities that develop camaraderie among teachers.

And another one reflected:

"We have assets with new teachers with new ideas and ways of learning that they experienced themselves. We need more time to talk with new teachers about their lessons so they can observe others. Time is our biggest challenge, and we can look at creating more time in many creative ways.

It may be time for the current evaluation system to be reconsidered, especially in light of the Profile of the SC Graduate, which calls for deeper student learning. District officials, teachers, and principals appreciated using SLOs and focusing on growth, not just teaching behaviors. However, the SLOs have been challenging to develop and execute as part of the evaluation system, often becoming an overly time-consuming requirement."
As one district leader emphasized:

“We need to incorporate a form of self-assessment and peer review that is not simply required but sought out because it is helpful and closely aligned with support systems. Architects do charrettes, doctors do case debriefing, and teachers should similarly collaborate with their colleagues to refine their lessons and classroom practices.”

### Professional Learning and Evaluation

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<tr>
<th>What Is</th>
<th>What Could Be</th>
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<tr>
<td>The wide range of professional development is not always aligned with teacher needs</td>
<td>Redefining professional learning that is guided by teachers and most often led by them</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional coaches, who do not teach, may not have needed skills and “legitimacy” with teachers</td>
<td>Redesigning the role of instructional coaches to build legitimacy and teaching capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional learning is often delivered in large group, workshop formats on the 5 contract days designated for professional development</td>
<td>Rescheduling professional learning to include routine collaboration, built into regular work schedules—among teachers for the purpose of instructional improvement, including whole child considerations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher evaluations are too often experienced as a compliance-driven activity and therefore are of less value to individual teachers or their schools</td>
<td>Rethinking teacher evaluation reconceptualized as a primarily formative tool for improvement and as peer learning and review for veteran teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning objectives are a well-intended component of evaluation, but they are “needlessly complicated” and consume needed resources</td>
<td>Reconsidering the Student Learning Objective portion of the evaluation with the option of using micro-credentials for teachers to document their impact</td>
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“We need more time to dive into peer observation — teachers learning from teachers in their classrooms.”

- Veronica Thomas, teacher leader, Fairfield
Leadership and Compensation

The research evidence is strong: Collective leadership in schools substantially influences student achievement more than individual leadership – principals and district leaders do not lose influence when others, such as teachers, gain influence.\(^\text{18}\) South Carolina teachers want a pathway to career advancement that will allow them to lead without leaving the classroom. They want options rather than taking on full-time administrative, coaching, or supervisory roles to earn a higher professional salary. The teachers we talked with noted that these roles could focus on developing and adapting curriculum, mentoring new teachers, leading professional learning, and working with community partners and allied professionals.

In many ways, we have just begun to learn about how Pickens, through its partnership with the University of Oulu, has established a cohort of teachers and administrators who are learning to lead instruction together through distributed leadership. Educators from Finland and Pickens have focused on personalized and joyful learning that accelerated teacher retention during the pandemic.

However, too few opportunities exist. One of our advisors, Amy Medina, offered a powerful narrative of how she approached her district to think differently about teacher leadership – and they did.

“I met with our superintendent at the time about growing our own talent within our own school district. The district created a leadership program, where the district works with various individuals throughout the school district. One has to apply to join the cohort, get interviewed and go through the development process. But, I felt like that was still too small. So, I’ve been working on this in my own school, where we’ve created a teacher leadership program. I created a survey on Google that was a needs analysis. That’s what we call it in the industrial-organizational world – they do a needs analysis to see exactly what the employees are looking for. I did the same to find the needs of our my teaching colleagues.

And then we pair up with administration. Because of course they have district and school goals that they have to accomplish on their own and just kind of looking to see where they all intersect. We’re actually also bringing in student input too, to see what they are looking for in their teachers and what kind of development they want to see. If they want some other things in their classroom or new strategies, we are looking at how we could incorporate that in our PD.

And we have two different groups of teachers, we have senior teacher leaders and they have to apply to get into the program. We have a professional learning community where we meet together and we lead a lot of the PD ourselves. We have (an approach) to support our junior teacher leaders – helping the younger ones come up and where they also can showcase their talents and their abilities. Sometimes some of those younger teachers have some things to add that some of the veteran teachers don’t have. It’s about creating a community between all the different groups. But also it is about growing your own people and retaining them as well.”

- Amy Medina, teacher leader, Rock Hill School District Teacher of the Year 21-22
This story seemed to be the exception, not the norm. Teachers were quick to point out how they have been underutilized as leaders. As one district teacher of the year noted:

“...It’s not like [teachers] don’t have the ideas, but sometimes administrators don’t necessarily know how to facilitate ... or empower teachers to hop in and work on some of their ideas.”

District officials also noted that they have several leadership development programs in place. However, most focus primarily on developing teachers for the principalship, not as leaders from the classroom.

Most importantly, South Carolina teachers lamented the lack of time to learn and lead and administrators who did not know how to empower them. When conversations focused on top-performing education systems like Singapore, where teachers often have 15 hours a week to learn from each other, the South Carolina educators laughed. One said:

“I think it would be a good, lofty kind of goal. I would just be happy with two hours each week to work with my colleagues and collaborate with them.”

School leaders were eager to talk about the lack of autonomy to test innovations, including teacher leadership. Principals reported that they learn the most from educators from other schools.

As we pointed out previously, we can learn much more from the SC Department of Education’s collective leadership initiative that spurs teachers and administrators from a small number of schools to jointly create productive, professional, and collaborative school working environments. One school, Walker Gamble Elementary in New Zion, SC, has redefined professional learning and leadership by redesigning the curriculum and schedules. Hence, teachers have up to eight hours a week in collaborative professional learning where several teachers can teach and lead in hybrid roles. Teacher-led learning walks in each other’s classrooms embeds professional development. The principal’s role is to create opportunities for teachers to lead.

As Allen Kirby, principal of Walker Gamble, said:

“My job as principal is to get out of the way and trust [the teachers’] expertise.

Allen attributes the rapid rise in students’ academic achievement and becoming a recent Palmetto’s Finest winner to the development of teacher leadership in his school.
Thinking differently about salaries.

Improving salaries is critical to resolving teacher supply, demand, and quality issues. Most Americans support raising teacher pay. Almost 3 in 4 members of the general public believe teacher salaries should increase, and while Democrats are more likely to call for better pay, people of both parties tend to agree on this matter. Parents of public school students are even more supportive.¹⁹

And for a good reason.

Teachers’ compensation is essential because salary schedules affect the attractiveness of teaching as a professional choice. Particularly when the pay is better for those in other fields with similar education requirements. There is an expectation for teachers to take on extra roles without additional compensation; when paid, the supplements are usually small compared with the work involved.

The vast majority of South Carolina’s school districts pay more than the minimum salary. Wealthier school systems can pay more for teachers through local salary supplements, and they can add more steps to the schedule. The smaller tax base for rural school districts often precludes adding steps or making significant increases, handicapping them with uncompetitive salary offers. On the other hand, some districts, like Charleston, are experimenting with differentiated pay for math teachers in high-need schools. The district has experimented with a form of merit pay in the recent past, and of late, Meeting Street Schools are supporting financial bonuses for teachers who raise student test scores in seven district schools. Charleston officials reported they have little data yet concerning the effectiveness of the latest efforts to pay teachers differently.

Researchers have concluded that “most merit-based plans have rested on the assumption that teachers will improve their practice for monetary incentives rather than connected monetary incentives to teachers’ efforts to advance their careers or to goals for improving a school district.”²⁰ Some studies have shown merit pay programs to be associated with a modest, statistically significant, positive effect on student test scores.²¹ Most do not.²²

The district officials and teachers with whom we worked are very interested in thinking differently about teaching salaries. In Fairfield, district officials reported that CTE teachers are paid based on industry experience – not on a single salary schedule. In late August 2022, under the leadership of Charleston’s chief human resources officer, Bill Briggman, the district launched a task force on teacher pay led primarily by those teaching in the district, including one of our advisors, AJ Barnes, a classroom teacher. As Briggman noted, there are just “so many issues with making sure that young folks are considering the career and a big part of that is pay” – especially in Charleston with its high cost of living.
In one work session, the South Carolina teacher leaders discussed a report on performance pay developed by teachers almost 15 years ago. They, too, were interested in moving away from the traditional, single-salary schedule. However, their view of performance metrics for such a compensation model is aligned with their knowledge and skills and what they accomplish – not standardized test scores.

The teachers with whom we worked were considering new compensation models tied to their leadership – and in some ways consistent with how Singapore has designed its performance pay system (see next section).

One teacher said:

“I love the idea of how the knowledge and skills you bring to the table is reflected in your pay. What are you doing outside of the classroom? There are so many teachers who have talents but don’t volunteer their time because they cannot afford to.”

Another noted:

“I could see why some teachers might get upset about a form of performance pay, but we have to provide some opportunities for those teachers who are going the extra mile, and get things done. I do a lot of the things because I’m passionate and I’m dedicated, I want to improve my students lives. I help my fellow teachers get better at teaching. I have peers who do not do what I do, and they make more money than me. And that is a problem.

And finally another asserted:

“We need to get the people who make the decisions about our salaries to see all the work that we do for children and families, and [see that] we are actually worth more to our state [than what is reflected in our current salaries].”

One thing is certain: Teachers we talked with look forward to working with policymakers to create the kind of approach that will make the profession more attractive and develop professional pathways for them to advance and lead without leaving the classroom.

“Even in my family, with two teacher salaries, it can be a struggle [financially] to teach and raise a family. We almost qualified for free daycare during the pandemic, even though we both have two master’s degrees. But there’s so much more to the story. Teachers feeling supported and heard as the professionals they are, that would be a dream”

– Lesley Snyder, middle school English teacher, 2021 Milken Educator Award Winner
Leadership and Compensation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Is</th>
<th>What Could Be</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No clear professional pathway for teacher advancement that includes leadership and additional compensation without leaving the classroom</td>
<td>Developing pilot career pathway models, based on exemplar models across nation and globe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few leadership roles in schools for teachers and where they do exist (for example, department or team leaders), they often have little power in school decisions</td>
<td>Expanding the roles of teachers already in leadership roles and compensating them for advancement as they would be in other similar professions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership programs primarily designed to move educators into full time administrative positions</td>
<td>Redefining leadership programs to prepare and utilize expert teachers who have time to teach and lead – with a focus on deeper student learning and whole child education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limited use of NBCTs</td>
<td>Creating a statewide strategy to utilize NBCTs as leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single salary schedules built on tradition not supply and demand, not aligned to cost-of living increases, and topped out before many teachers want to end their careers</td>
<td>Establishing a teacher-led study working group on career pathways and professional compensation tied to a broad array of teaching and learning outcomes</td>
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These sentiments led us to surface a view into how other school systems, their university partners, and top-performing education jurisdictions from across the globe are rethinking the job of teachers and the teaching profession itself. We explore two specific case studies next.
Lessons from Arizona and Singapore

Workplaces across the globe have come to value collaboration and teams to drive innovation. Researchers have found that employees are "more likely to take calculated risks that lead to innovation if they have the support of a team behind them." Our research team turned to two examples of teaching teams and teacher leadership – one from Arizona and the other from Singapore – to shape a roadmap for evolving the teaching job in South Carolina.
In our deliberations, South Carolina educators kept pointing to the importance of collaboration and distributed leadership models as key levers of change to address teaching effectiveness as well as shortages of teachers. Across the nation, increasing numbers of education leaders recognize that students cannot engage in more profound and personalized learning without a fundamental of the teaching job and implementation of educator teams with distributed expertise.

In the private sector, a new urgency to transform the workplace is well underway – fueled partly by accelerating artificial intelligence and automation as drivers of economic development. As McKinsey and Company have pointed out, organizational leaders must “work together with their people to create personalized, authentic, and motivating experiences that strengthen the individual, team, and company performance.” Indeed, workplaces across the globe have come to value collaboration and teams to drive innovation. Researchers have found that employees are “more likely to take calculated risks that lead to innovation if they have the support of a team behind them.”

However, teachers typically teach in isolation from each other, and teaching remains the same one-size-fits-all job. The national non-profit Education Resource Strategies noted that the teaching job needs restructuring to “help teachers maximize their impact on student learning and well-being.”

Our research team turned to two examples of teaching teams and teacher leadership – one from Arizona and the other from Singapore – to shape a roadmap for evolving the teaching job in South Carolina.
Mesa Public Schools and Arizona State University

Stevenson Elementary School, a partner with Arizona State University’s Next Education Workforce Initiative, is a Title I school serving about 700 students in preschool through 6th grade. The school has seven houses of approximately 100 students each. One of the houses serves kindergarten students and the other six serve multi-grade students: two each for grades 1–2, grades 3–4, and grades 5–6. The houses are lead by teams of four teachers, a lead and specialists in math, reading, science, social studies, and an innovation teacher. Often, houses include additional team members. For example, a teacher candidate (including residents from ASU’s Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College) as well as paraeducators and community-based educators.

Several years ago, the school took down parts of the wall between what were once four separate 3rd-grade classrooms to create a reimagined physical space for active small and large-group student-led teaching and learning.

Source: Arizona State University, Next Education Workforce Initiative

Source: Arizona State University and Stevenson Elementary, Mesa Public Schools
Cross-grade level teams with shared rosters in grades K-1, 2-3, and 4-6 support the development of shared, cross-curricular materials while increasing whole-child support more effectively and distributing their expertise, so no one teacher has to “do it all.”

As Dean Carole Basile, Executive Director of Next Education Workforce Initiative Brent Maddin, and R. Lennon Audrain have noted in their new book:

“The doors between classrooms also allow educators to collaborate in real time, dynamically group and re-group students, and make ongoing adjustments to instruction. Sometimes all the students are together in one space for a meeting, project kick-off, or even a mini-lesson. More often, students spread across the learning space working in small groups with educators, each other, or individually.”

Basile, Maddin, and Audrain also point out that students often move between groups with more personalized support, and special educators often come into the classes as needed. The school also draws on not just university interns but also retired teachers, high school “education professions” students (similar to the SC Teacher Cadets), and allied professionals from the community to support the teaching teams. Each Wednesday afternoon, following early dismissal, Stevenson’s teams have two hours to co-plan, analyze data, adjust student groupings, and troubleshoot procedures and operations. Each team’s lead teacher sets agendas for this time in collaboration with core and extended educator team members. “Protecting time for teams to meet and trusting them to operate autonomously is a critical piece of the puzzle for whole-school team-based models,” school leader Krista Adams says.

As the walls come down between classes and grade levels, so does the “one teacher, one classroom” model of teaching and learning. The school encourages each educator to develop specialized expertise, such as trauma-informed teaching strategies, based on their strengths and the needs of students and the team. Teaching expertise becomes distributed by encouraging each educator, deepening emotional support, and allowing students to design, build, and work on interdisciplinary projects.
Before moving to their teacher team model, Stevenson was on the path to school improvement. In fact, before redesigning curriculum and teacher roles, Stevenson went from a “D” to a “B” rating by Arizona’s accountability system by focusing on a narrow set of academic outcomes. However, during a February 2022 site visit to the school, the principal noted, “I did not see how teachers could make any more improvements,” and there was “no joy of learning” while focusing on test scores. The superintendent agreed, making the case that it is impossible to fully teach to their Portrait of a Graduate with the 1-teacher-1-classroom model of teaching and learning.

A teacher from the 3rd-grade team at Stevenson said:

“As a team member, I know 120 students better than when I taught 30 students alone.

Student teachers, called residents, talked about how they learn more about teaching and learning in their 6-person team as they can “bounce ideas off each other” all day. The principal pointed out that “teachers do not have to be an expert at everything.” Through this model, teachers become more efficacious in their instruction, with clear and improved student outcomes. Perhaps most importantly, teachers are finding more joy in their jobs. One teacher reported:

“Even during the pandemic, we were not stressed because we were well-organized as a team.

A new survey of Arizona teachers has suggested that those who teach in the Next Education Workforce model are more satisfied than their peers who teach in more traditional classrooms. Basile summed it up, saying, “We do not have a teacher shortage problem; we have educator workplace design problems.”
Singapore: Teachers as Nation Builders

In 1965, Singapore, a tiny island nation, became an independent country and, over the past half-century, has emerged as one of the top-performing education systems in the world. Over the last decade, Singapore’s students have typically outperformed every country in reading, mathematics, and science on the 70-nation Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). More recently, its students, including those from low-income households, do far better than most others in assessing collaborative problem-solving skills and global competencies needed to thrive in an interconnected and changing world.

The transformation of its education system did not happen overnight. Much of its rapid rise to the top of international rankings of student achievement began in the early 2000s when the Ministry of Education (MOE) crafted and launched its “Teach Less, Learn More” (TLLM) initiative to accelerate students’ creativity, critical thinking, and passion for lifelong learning. The curriculum was streamlined, thus reducing rote test-based teaching and learning. Students had more choices in what they learned. Design and technology, as well as history and literature, became equally important. Singapore hired more counselors and “co-curricular” teaching specialists to create school-community-business partnerships, which created more time for content area teachers to customize and personalize lessons to meet the needs of increasingly diverse students.

Singapore, with a population of 5.8 million people (about the size of South Carolina), now focuses less on test score results and more on continuous improvement throughout its system. In 2004, then Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong spoke during his National Day Rally about an education system where teachers “teach less to our students so that they will learn more.” The nation hinged its school transformation efforts on developing a comprehensive educator development system with teachers seen as “nation builders.” Singapore has about 33,000 teachers – and a mere 3 percent attrition rate.

Teaching is a desirable profession in Singapore for at least ten reasons:

1. Starting salaries for teachers are comparable to those of accountants and engineers in the civil service – and top-level teachers can earn as much as principals as part of a comprehensive career ladder for educators (see below)

2. The MOE casts a wide net, advertising in various media and platforms to “sell” teaching as an attractive career

3. The National Institute of Education (NIE) is the sole educator preparation program and has a strong emphasis on developing teachers’ efficacy, including engagement with the community as well as content-specific pedagogical skills
4. Teacher education tuition is paid for by the government (in exchange for a multi-year commitment to teaching – like the SC Teaching Fellows), and pre-service educators also receive a “residency-like” salary as they prepare to teach.

5. The Academy of Singapore Teachers begins working with pre-service educators prior to the start of formal training and offers a range of professional learning supports “by teachers for teachers.”

6. New teachers have a reduced teaching load of about 20 percent in their two-year induction period as they continue to learn to teach.

7. Senior, Lead, and Master teachers are expected (as part of their additional paid responsibilities) to mentor novices and colleagues based on individual, team, school, and system needs.

8. The MOE provides 100 hours of professional learning for each teacher annually, which often occurs during school hours with resources provided for “relief teachers” (and the MOE offers scholarships for study leaves for a select percentage of teachers each year).

9. Professional learning is embedded within the school day – and teachers (who work on average 46 hours per week) only spend about 18 hours teaching, with the rest of their workload focused on collaboration with colleagues and community partners, as well as action research related to problems of practice and student outcomes.

10. The evaluation process, known as the Enhanced Performance Management System, is focused on the following:

   - Student outcomes such as quality learning and character development, not necessarily test scores
   - Professional outcomes for individuals and colleagues
   - Organizational outcomes like contributions to key goals and projects

Anchored in a comprehensive career ladder system are the teaching evaluations and other aspects of an educator’s development. The system creates the expectation that everyone will improve and advance, coupled with the means to do so.

Singapore offers teachers three main career paths: Teaching, Leadership, and Specialist. At each level, informed by evidence assembled through teaching evaluations, teachers take on varied formal roles within their school or through the entire teaching fraternity of this top-performing education system.

Senior Teachers serve as mentors to novices and lead professional learning with about 20 percent of their teaching schedule “offloaded.” Lead Teachers develop the senior teachers with about a 33 percent reduction in their teaching load. Master Teachers are “teachers of teachers;” about 80 percent of their work is at the national level, where they serve as primary staff for the Academy of Singapore Teachers (AST). Principal Master Teachers are the chief pedagogical experts in their subjects and are leaders of the AST. There are about 100 Master and Principal Teachers in Singapore to serve the education profession.
All teachers can earn performance bonuses of about 10 percent, and advancement in the teaching track can result in pay raises of 15-20 percent. In assessing teacher performance, Singapore does not use a single score from its evaluation system, student test scores, or what might be the equivalent of South Carolina’s SLOs. Instead, in consultation with colleagues, the performance assessment process draws on evidence from the teacher’s portfolio plus the supervisor’s judgment of the teacher’s contributions to the school and community. The evaluation process requires teachers to assess themselves and address questions such as: *In what ways have you improved? How are you going to improve yourself further? What are the projects you would like to take on?*29

Compared to their counterparts in other nations, regular classroom teachers teach about 50 percent of their typical workday, spending additional hours collaborating with peers, refining lessons, and working closely with parents and families.

The Leadership Track, in which 25 percent of educators participate, begins with the school-level subject and level heads, with a 20 percent reduction in teaching. Principals are usually rotated to both share and spread expertise across schools. After successfully leading diverse schools, principals may advance to Cluster Superintendent or Deputy Director positions.

Teachers who want to engage in research may elect to join the Specialist Track, serving the Ministry. Advancement and pay are more fluid, based on the quality of research and contributions. There are about 200 specialists, less than 1 percent of the educator workforce.30

As a U.S. News and World report concluded, the United States can learn much from Singapore and the education system that prepares and supports teachers for collaboration. Ironically, Singaporean education leaders often report that they learned how to create their teacher development system from U.S. researchers and school practitioners.
Conclusions and Moving Forward

As Senator Greg Hembree stated, "it is time to stop nibbling around the edges of school reform and the teaching profession." The time is now. South Carolina teachers and administrators are catalyzed to evolve the teaching profession.
Conclusions and Moving Forward

Over the last nine months, our partner districts, teachers, and administrators have shared tremendous insight. Coupled with compelling research evidence, powerful exemplars, and good work underway in South Carolina, we can begin to see the next steps toward advancing the teaching profession.

As SC Senator Greg Hembree told us, “it is time for us in SC to stop nibbling around the edges of school reform and the teaching profession.” We can take incremental, strategic steps that lead to significant change.

These takeaways leave us empowered to evolve education in South Carolina:

1. Measure results of recruitment and retention strategies to use resources effectively. District officials report that a wide range of teacher recruitment and retention efforts, funded by the state and locally, are too often implemented in isolation (fragmentation) with too little knowledge of their effectiveness.

2. Teacher leadership can be based in the classroom. Teachers report too few opportunities to lead – and while NBCTs are paid above and beyond the state salary schedule, they are not well utilized as leaders

3. Career and compensation growth can be tied to a fuller view of performance and student outcomes. Teachers want a clear path for career advancement without leaving the classroom entirely, and they are open to alternatives to the single salary schedule. Teachers want to be recognized and rewarded for what they accomplish and the roles they play in improving academic achievement and serving the whole child.

4. Innovation in the teaching profession can be implemented and scaled successfully. Teachers and administrators hunger to redefine the teaching job, and districts have begun to innovate in ways that can lead to significant changes. Still, too few mechanisms in the state exist to spread the technical know-how needed to take good ideas to scale.

5. Collaborative teaching and leadership models are yielding positive results. Examples abound – including from a school-university partnership in Arizona and the world’s top-performing system in Singapore – of how to move beyond the 1-teacher and 1-classroom model of teaching, learning, and schooling.
As Tommy Hodges, USC’s College of Education Dean, noted: “We have the data, we know the issues more fully, and here is a way to move forward.”

In reviewing the current evidence, examples, and policy landscape, we have developed a preliminary framework grounded in multiple pathways into teaching and developing integrated data to drive action at the local and state level. We advocate for new state policies paired with existing funding to strengthen regional partnerships so that school districts and universities don’t tackle educator development challenges alone. Investments in better data will highlight successful programs and policies to scale. New forms of collaboration can ensure greater alignment between existing programs.

We see a series of transformation pilots among school-university-community partnerships, beginning with those locales that are ready and have the bandwidth to evolve their educator development system. These partnerships will be rooted in design principles, not tightly defined prescriptions. We have six in mind for consideration – including more team-based teaching, relocation of FTE dollars, new school structures, better matching of new recruits’ strengths to their assignments, teacher-led professional learning, and technologies to spread teaching expertise.

Evolving the Education Profession in South Carolina:
A Preliminary Framework

We do not advocate applying all the framework’s features at once. We need to know more about innovations in human capital strategies across all school districts, not just three. With the proper support and incentives, the system can be built similarly to what is emerging in Arizona and what Singapore has created. Arizona has been working on its team teaching model for five years, and it took Singapore 20 years to implement its system.
The General Assembly has made significant investments on three fronts:

- Developing a robust data infrastructure around the supply, demand, and effectiveness;
- Collecting and utilizing data on teacher working conditions; and
- Accelerating teaching residencies and a system for teacher leadership around student-led learning.

Importantly, in 2022, South Carolina lawmakers established a Teacher Recruitment and Retention Task Force (Proviso 1.114) to find solutions to the state’s teacher shortage crisis. The timing could not be better. Task force recommendations will be made by May 31, 2023. Additional funding from Carnegie and What School Could Be will enable us to begin taking small steps that can lead to big change:

- Prototyping a professional learning community to scale educator-led innovations;
- Developing a sustainable teacher residency model anchored by teacher leaders and new staffing models;
- Sustaining a policy and practice learning exchange with Arizona and Singapore; and
- Evolving the teaching profession through evidence-based policy and practice

Senator Greg Hembree, Chair of the Senate Education Committee, admonishes:

“It is time to stop nibbling around the edges of school reform and the teaching profession.

Senator Hembree has committed to co-lead a series of policy convenings in 2022-23. These convenings will engage key stakeholders to look deeply at the evidence and insights to drive policy action and to ensure any steps that follow lead to significant change over time.

The time is now. Our state’s 730,000 students deserve no less than ensuring a high-quality teacher in the classroom, now and in the future. South Carolina teachers and administrators are ready to evolve their profession – and in doing so, teacher shortages will be addressed and student-led learning will be accelerated.
Appendix A: The Data Collection Grid
The Data Collection Grid

**Background.** We are interested in how we might develop a coherent system of teacher and school leader development for whole-child education and more profound, more equitable learning for every student. This project, funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, will: (1) assess the human capital assets and needs of three school community partners and their readiness for the redesign of the education professions for school innovation; and (2) develop an evidence-based framework for South Carolina and inform legislative action for upcoming sessions of the General Assembly.

From November 2021 to June 2022, the research team and its partners will: (1) profile the supply, demand, and quality of the local educator workforce and the role of educator preparation programs; (2) document how districts allocate people, certified educators, substitutes, paraprofessionals; (3) identity current recruitment and retention practices (mentoring of recruits); (4) assess the impact of educator evaluation processes; (5) summarize the use of professional learning dollars and how leadership among teachers and principals is developed and utilized; and (6) consider alternative teacher and school leader compensation structures for more profound, more equitable learning outcomes for students.

Let’s first define the whole child and deeper learning as a way to anchor the evidence-based narrative and framework we develop together:

**Whole child education** connects and supports a young person’s academic learning with their social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and mental health needs and anchors schools as hubs of their community – providing for a more effective and cost-efficient system of schooling that draws on cross-sector partnerships to ensure that every student reaches their full potential and have the knowledge and skills to succeed in life and career.

**Deeper learning** enables students to think critically, solve problems, use knowledge for new purposes, and learn how to develop the knowledge and skills needed for life, work, and citizenship – and equity ensures these experiences for every student in every school.

With these two definitions in mind, how might we document and understand the three districts’ teacher and school leader development systems?
Part I: The status of teachers and principals in your district

For each of the following nine key questions about the supply, demand, and quality of the local educator workforce, we ask for answers with three components:

- **Overall general response**
- **Essential documentation:** Link any district or school-level documents deemed to be most related to the question.
- **Insight:** Share team conversation and individual thoughts on documents and evidence

**Key Questions:**

1. Current certified staff (see [SC educator staffing by position code](#))
2. Proportion of your new hires are from in-state or out-of-state?
3. Proportion of your newly filled FTE’s that were filled by contract teachers from other countries?
4. Define critical shortages (type of teachers and principals)
5. Turnover? Turnover differences by school? Do you collect exit surveys?
6. What is known about why educators stay or leave?
7. Substitute teacher budget number of subs
8. Paraprofessional budget and number of paras
9. Innovations from “pandemic” in staffing in using people and FTEs? Lessons learned?
Part II: Assessing Plus, Deltas, and Innovations

How is your district addressing teacher and school leader development challenges and opportunities? For each of the following five domains, we would like to learn about the following:

- What is the district doing now? What is working? (Pluses)
- How are people and programs, and dollars used?
- What needs to be changed (Delta)? What specifically needs to be abandoned?
- What innovations have you discovered or used (think pandemic-induced disruptions) that need to be part of a reimagined education profession?

**Task:** For each question, please link relevant documents and information for your district. In the columns next to each linked document, please include notes and thoughts about how it pertains to the question. *Please choose a color to type your responses that is unique from other team members.*

For each domain, we asked several questions/probes. For each probe, we asked for:

- **Documents:** Please link any district or school-level documents deemed to be most related to the question.
- **Evidence:** Discuss examples and initiatives related to the question.
- **Insight:** Share team conversation and individual thoughts on documents and evidence.
Domain 1: Recruiting high quality teachers and principals

Probes:
1. Sources of new recruits (in-state EPPs, alternative, out of state fully licensed, international, GYO like CCAP, retired teachers). How do you utilize recruitment dollars from the state (CERRA)?
2. Budget for recruitment?
3. Signing bonuses? Longevity bonuses?
4. Use of retired teachers
5. Impact of licensure requirements (PRAXIS)
6. Utilization of state Cadets, Fellows, Call Me Mister, etc.?

Domain 2: Preparing teachers and principals with IHE and other partners

Probes:
1. How many prep partners do you have?
2. How do you work with IHE and other partners?
3. Which IHEs prepare teachers most effectively? What criteria?
4. 4.0 rubric? Profile of SC Graduate?
5. How are teachers prepared to teach whole child? What would you like to see in the future of prep? What role should districts play?

Domain 3: Inducting and mentoring teachers

Probes:
1. Brief description of your induction program – length, format, activities, staffing? Sources of funds? How much does the state provide/district?
2. Who gets mentored? All first years? How much is spent for how many novices? Etc.
3. How much are mentors paid? How are mentors trained?
4. How do much time do novices have with mentors (hours per week on average)?
5. How much time do mentors have to mentor (hours per week on average)?
6. Any evaluation?
Domain 4: Professional learning, evaluating, and leadership development (and how much time created for all 3)

Probes:

1. Describe professional development in the district
2. Use of coaches, how many, do they also teach?
3. How does teacher evaluation inform professional learning? Who conducts evaluation?
4. How much is invested in evaluation? Outside providers?
5. Leadership programs for teachers and principals?
6. What leadership roles do teachers play?
7. How do schools create time for teachers to learn and lead on behalf of the whole child?
8. How many NBCTs do you have? How are they developed? Is there a cohort for those interested? Used as leaders?

Domain 5: Compensating teachers and principals and alternatives to the single salary schedule

Probes:

1. Copy of salary schedule for teachers and principals as well as paras, sub pay, instructional coaches
2. Kinds of supplements offered to teachers beyond base? What are the ranges (dollar amount) offered?
3. How much is spent on step increases on an annual basis?
4. 3 most effective (or innovative) examples of teacher leadership
5. How teachers and principals are recognized
6. Any history of paying teachers and principals differently? Lessons learned?
Appendix B: The Profiles of the Three School Districts*

* Based upon data available Spring of 2022
Our district partners – Charleston, Fairfield, and Pickens – represent some of South Carolina’s diverse urban, suburban and rural school contexts. Drawn from the state databases and district educators’ interviews are the following descriptions:

Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is South Carolina’s second-largest school system, representing a unique blend of urban and suburban rural schools, serving almost 50,000 students, with 51 percent classified as living in low-income households. The student population is diverse – 49 percent white, 34 percent Black, 12 percent Hispanic or Latino, and 6 percent representing other racial groups.

The district’s longstanding achievement gaps have been well documented – with a recent report revealing that white students scored in the 77th percentile in reading, while their Black and Hispanic peers scored at the 34th and 35th percentile, respectively. In addition, as reported by ProPublica, Black students are 5.8 times as likely to be suspended as white students.

Ninety-four percent of the district’s teachers in 2021 met expectations according to the district’s teaching evaluation criteria. Eighty-four percent of teachers were rated exemplary or proficient in meeting student learning objectives. However, teachers and administrators pointed out the need for more preparation and support for learning by young people whose life experiences differ from their own. The district’s 81 schools are organized by nine constituent communities, where segregation of white and Black students is relatively high. Administrators reported that wide disparities among them – funding, living conditions, resources related to district size, poverty, and other socio-economic conditions – present challenges for students and their teachers.

CCSD is home to almost 5,400 educators, of which approximately 2,700 are regular classroom teachers. Over 8 in 10 teachers are white and female, and 2 in 3 have earned advanced degrees. Of the district’s teachers, 7 percent (or slightly more than 200) are National Board Certified. The district has no systematic plan to utilize its expertise and accomplishments.

The median years of teaching experience are ten – and the average teacher salary is $54,448. Currently, teachers in their Acceleration (formerly Top Talent) Schools can earn more than other teachers who are paid on the longstanding single salary schedule ranging from $5,000 to $8,500. Little data exists on the impact of these investments. Administrators and teachers lament the high cost of living in Charleston.

The state reports a district-wide teacher retention rate of 89 percent. Teacher turnover is high, with severe shortages in mathematics, science, and special education. Teachers move to other schools for greener pastures. Teachers attribute decisions to leave teaching to compensation, culture and changing demands on them, and administrators said the same. Charleston has over 600 parapro-
professionals who could become teachers. The district has instituted an innovative program, Teach Charleston, that allows non-traditional recruits (paraprofessionals and career-switchers from outside education) to pursue certification at no cost; and is partnering with the University of South Carolina to create alternative pathways for men of color to become early childhood and elementary school teachers.

In addition, CCSD works to connect classified staff with a Bachelor’s degrees other avenues into teaching through two alternative pathways in South Carolina (CarolinaCAP at USC and PACE at SC Department of Education) and nationally (Teachers of Tomorrow). The district also have two cohorts of classified staff working on a Bachelor’s in Early Childhood Education and one cohort working on a Master’s in Elementary Education. The former will be ready to serve as teacher of record beginning August 2023. Tuition, books, and required exams are covered in full by the district and its partners. In turn, candidates agree to serve in the district for three years as classroom teacher of record.

CCSD has tried distance learning – and virtual teachers – specifically to address the shortage of algebra teachers. The district spent $7 million (in the previous year) on substitutes when teachers attend professional learning during the day or are absent due to illness or personal reasons. However, administrators report difficulty recruiting sufficient numbers of qualified and reliable substitutes.

The district invests in the induction of new teachers, primarily through state (SC ADEPT) and federal (Title II) funding. Eight coaches lead the program that oversees, supports, coaches, recruits, and provides site-based mentors (who also teach full-time). CCSD offers many district- and school-level PD offerings (math, literacy, assessments, SEL, etc.) supported across several departments and teams. The district supports peer observations and walkthroughs anchored by best practices of the Teaching Channel. The district’s approach to Collaborative Analysis with OTE – and SWIVL lessons – has considerable promise to open up classrooms so teachers can see each other teach and share best practices. The district employs 29 full-release (meaning no direct teaching responsibilities) school-based instructional coaches across the district.

Fairfield County School District

Fairfield County School District serves approximately 2,600 students, of which over 85 percent live in low-income households. The student population is also 85 percent Black, with another 10 percent white and 5 percent representing other racial groups.

Located about 25 minutes north of Columbia and 50 minutes south of Charlotte, the district consists of ten schools – one high school, one middle school, three elementary schools, a magnet school for math and science, an alternative school, and a school of technology.
Central office administrators describe their district as “large enough to offer progressive programs yet small enough to allow teachers the chance to cultivate personal and active interest in each student.” The district has been able to spend more per pupil than most rural communities due mainly to a nearby nuclear power plant. However, several years ago, plans for the plant’s expansion were abandoned, crushing anticipated economic development for the county.

Recently Fairfield has become part of ALL4SC, a multi-district University of South Carolina initiative that supports whole-child education through a community school approach. The project is beginning its third year.

Fairfield is home to almost 470 educators, of which 200 are classified as regular classroom teachers. About 74 percent of the district’s teachers are female, and nearly 2 in 3 teachers are Black. The district casts a wide recruitment net to find and develop teachers of color. About 66 percent have earned advanced degrees, and over 9 in 10 met the state’s teaching evaluation criteria.

The average teacher’s salary is reported as $55,696. Nine of the district’s teachers are National Board Certified and play leadership roles that vary by school location. Two of the district’s nine NBCTs serve as facilitators for the cohort of teachers seeking advanced certification. The district has been developing a variety of leadership roles for teachers, and differential compensation for them, ranging from hundreds of dollars to thousands. For example, salary supplements range from $1,000 to $15,000 for athletic roles and $250- $3,500 for academic leadership (e.g., department chair) stipends. CTE teachers are paid based on industry experience – not on a single salary schedule. Additionally, teachers can receive a $5,000 retention bonus.

In 2021, the state reported a district-wide teacher retention rate of 93 percent. Among the schools, turnover ranged from 2 to 8 percent of its teachers. The district is experiencing teacher shortages at all levels.

Of the district’s 200 classroom teachers, 33 were new hires in 2021, 11 were international teachers serving through contacts with placement partners, and seven were in alternative certification programs. The district uses funding from CERRA for recruitment activities, including website development, international and alternative certification fees, stipends for new and critical needs teachers, and underwriting coursework and professional development when they hire teachers without complete preparation and certification.

The school district aggressively pursues the recruitment of teachers. Among the most unique and innovative strategies is their Teacher Village, providing affordable and attractive housing for teachers and their families. Housing helps “competitively attract the quantity and quality of teachers it needs” and “creates a community” of early career and experienced teachers who can live and learn together.

In addition, the district has a substantial budget of $511,000 for substitute teachers, and the budget for paraprofessionals is slightly over $1.7 million.
The School District of Pickens County

The School District of Pickens County, nestled in the beautiful foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, serves approximately 16,000 students. The student population is 77 percent white, 9 percent Hispanic, and 7 percent Black. Another 7 percent represent other racial groups. About 60 percent of students live in low-income households. With several nearby colleges including Clemson University and Anderson University, the district has had a ready supply of new teachers. Unfortunately, the school district is located between some of the highest-paying school systems in the state.

The district is home to 1,200 certified teachers. Most of these classroom teachers are hired directly from nearby universities – and many teachers originate from the community. About 78 percent of the district’s teachers are female, 93 percent are white, and about 65 percent have earned advanced degrees. Virtually everyone – 97% –meets the state’s teaching evaluation criteria.

The district is proud of its extensive induction program, helping new teachers in the district during their first year, primarily in preparation for their formal evaluation. The program includes the Summer New Teacher Academy, monthly meetings that address components of the SCTS 4.0 evaluation rubric, collaboration with two induction specialists, group meals, and assigned mentors for each new teacher. Mentors are full-time teachers, and each mentor receives a stipend of only $500 to spend about three hours per week with their assigned new teacher.

HR and curriculum leaders work closely with each other. Together they examine their evaluation data carefully – and have made investments, using Title II funds, in improving the classroom management skills of its teachers. The district utilizes a comprehensive professional learning plan to develop teachers. The plan incorporates data from assessments, the SCTS 4.0 Rubric, and teacher/administrator surveys and evaluations. The district offers “face-to-face, virtual, blended, and self-paced” professional development opportunities.

District officials report fewer applicants in math, science, foreign languages, and special education, as well as speech pathologists and school psychologists. Pickens is working with university partners in preparing a cohort of paraprofessionals to pursue education degrees and certification.

In 2021, the state reported a district-wide teacher retention rate of 92 percent. Of the 1,200 certified teachers, this past year vacancies existed in less than five classrooms.

The average teacher’s salary is $51,649. A recent report indicated that a single step increase costs the district about $800,000. Teachers have an opportunity to earn more by teaching additional courses virtually or in person.

The district deploys a range of full-time instructional coaches focusing on math and instructional
technology and specialists in English to Speakers of Other Languages. However, some principals have begun to use the flexibility of Title I funds afforded by the central office to place regular classroom teachers in hybrid roles with a reduced teaching load so they can also lead initiatives.

The pandemic required different approaches to solve problems. An example of this involved substitutes. The district developed an HR strategy to recruit and develop permanent, well-qualified substitutes assigned to each of the district’s 24 schools.

The district is also participating in the Leadership Academy program to develop new principals from its pool of teachers, with workshops offered through SC Association of School Administrators and Clemson, which provides advanced degrees to participants. Perhaps, most importantly, under the leadership of Superintendent Danny Merck, the district has established a partnership with the University of Oulu in Finland, where teachers and administrators are learning collectively to develop new skills in the classroom and to lead change in their respective local contexts.
Appendix C: The Teacher Advisors
Our team of teacher leaders advised us throughout this research and report, giving us powerful insight and sharing their stories of innovation and leadership in their schools, districts, and beyond. We are very grateful for their expertise, thoughtfulness, and willingness to support this project and work towards strengthening and empowering the teaching profession.

**Zachary Arms**

Zach teaches high school social studies at Liberty High School in Pickens County School District. He was one of five finalists for the 2023 SC Teacher of the Year award, recognized as an innovative teacher who created two new courses for Pickens County – Agricultural Economics (including internships that provide students with hands-on experience) and the Psychology of Superheroes (learning through inquiry). Zach is passionate about creating innovative teaching methods that not only bring the coursework to life for students but allow teachers to lead creatively.

**Adam “AJ” Barnes**

AJ is a high school social studies teacher and baseball coach at West Ashley High School in Charleston County School District. He was named 2021-22 District Teacher of the Year and serves on the CCSD Teacher Roundtable to advocate and be a voice for CCSD teachers. He is passionate about designing a system of teaching that is “laser-focused” on whole child education, which means giving teachers the space and time to continue to innovate, feed their life-long passion for learning, and grow within the school building as leaders.

**Michael Burgess**

Michael is the Lead Teacher for the Center for Law and Global Policy Development at River Bluff High School in Lexington County School District One. He has been a SC public school teacher for 27 years, and is currently working on developing The Carolina Teachers Covenant, an updated teacher bill of rights to bring honor and respect back into the teaching profession for all public school teachers in South Carolina. Michael is a strong advocate for teacher voice and leadership.

**Chanda Jefferson**

Chanda was named the 2020 SC Teacher of the Year and was the Science Department Chair, STEM Lead teacher, and science teacher at Fairfield Central High School in Fairfield County. She has a passion for education and student achievement, and is an advocate for teacher leadership and innovative, hands-on learning in the classroom. For the past two years, Chanda has served as a legislative fellow and policy advisor with the U.S. House
of Representatives, developing education policy. This fall, she began a new role as the Director of Community Engagement and Outreach for the University of Pennsylvania.

**Stephanie Johnson**
Stephanie is a reading interventionist at H.B. Rhame Elementary in Richland School District One. A National Board-Certified Teacher in early/middle childhood literacy, Stephanie was one of 5 educators nationwide who received the 2017 Horace Mann award for Teaching Excellence from the National Education Association. She has a passion for integrating family and community into the learning process, as well as providing equitable access for all students through racial and social justice initiatives.

**Amy Medina**
Amy teaches high school social studies at Northwestern High School in Rock Hill School District. She serves as Department Chair for Social Studies and was named the 2021 - 22 District Teacher of the Year. Very passionate about teacher leadership, Amy has worked with her superintendent to develop a teaching leadership program in her school, creating a professional learning community and leading professional development. She combines her knowledge of psychology with her experience as a teacher to change the education system from within.

**Lesley Snyder**
Lesley is an eighth-grade English teacher at Dutch Fork Middle School in Lexington-Richland School District 5. She is passionate about student voice, leading her to receive the 2021 Milken Educator Award this April for her work with student-led, project-based learning. She was the only SC recipient of this nation-wide award. Under her leadership as English Department Head, Dutch Fork holds the district’s highest scores in reading assessments.

**Veronica Thomas**
Veronica is a high school mathematics teacher and the STEAM Coordinator at Fairfield Central High School in Fairfield County School District. She serves as the 2021-22 District Teacher of the Year. She is a member of the Fairfield County Education Foundation Board, working towards strengthening the education profession and making a true impact in her district. Veronica is an advocate for teacher voice and teacher empowerment, as in order to support the whole child, we must support the whole teacher.
Endnotes


4. Ibid.


30 Ibid.