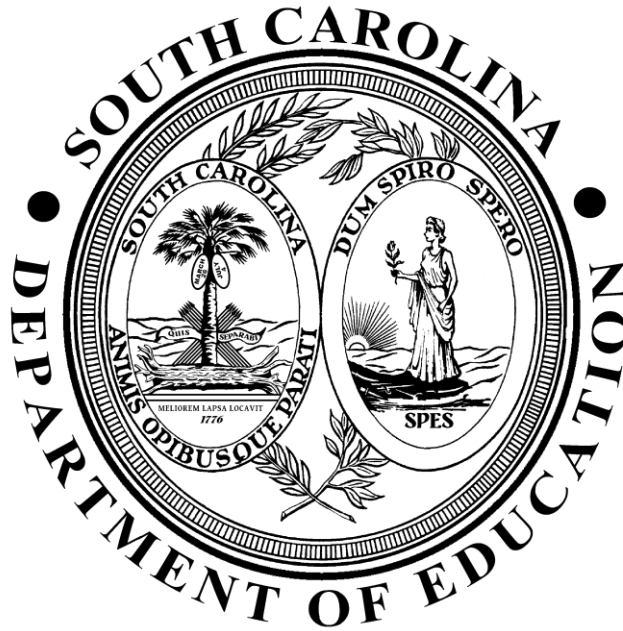


**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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*STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION*



**Annual Report on the American Board for the Certification of  
Teacher Excellence**

Provided to the South Carolina State Board of Education  
and General Assembly

Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-350

March 10, 2020

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## **Reporting Requirement**

Per S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-350, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) submits annually by March 31 to the State Board of Education (SBE) and General Assembly the total number of individuals employed in South Carolina with a passport certificate issued by the American Board for the Certification of Teaching Excellence (American Board) by district, as well as non-privileged information collected on these individuals through the Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching (ADEPT) reporting system.

## **Introduction**

The American Board is a self-sustaining, non-partisan, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization established in 2001 through a grant from the United States Department of Education. In June 2007, the South Carolina General Assembly passed the American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence Act, which allows school districts to hire individuals who have received a passport certificate issued by the organization. The statute, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-310, authorizes the following content areas: “biology, chemistry, English, mathematics, physics, or science. Additional areas of certification may be approved by the State Board of Education upon review of the longitudinal information required in Section 59-25-350.” Current areas are secondary biology, secondary chemistry, secondary English, secondary mathematics, secondary physics, secondary science, middle level language arts, middle level mathematics, and middle level science. Previously known as ABCTE, the organization is now known as the American Board and has relocated its headquarters from Washington, D.C. to Atlanta, Georgia.

Currently, South Carolina is one of fifteen states that accepts the American Board for initial certification purposes. The other states include Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Utah, and Wisconsin.

The American Board website describes the program as self-paced and self-directed and indicates that most candidates complete the program of study for the exams within an average of seven to ten months. Candidates must pass the organization’s content area examination and Professional Teaching Knowledge (PTK) examination. These tests are proprietary, and the organization does not provide states with information on the content of these tests. The exams have not been correlated to other certification examinations including the Praxis series approved for certification purposes in South Carolina.

According to American Board website, the full cost of the program may be up to \$2,850; however, the American Board offers special pricing on a routine basis, and the advertised cost fluctuates. Currently, there is a “one-time payment” promotional price of \$1,900. The American Board offers candidates an installment plan.

## **The American Board in South Carolina**

S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-330 states that a person who has received an American Board passport certificate (now called the *Classroom Ready* certificate) in one or more of the subject areas approved for South Carolina and who has a minimum of a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university or an institution with a teacher education program that has been approved by the SBE for certification purposes must be issued an appropriate Alternate Route certificate upon verification of employment in a South Carolina school district. The Alternate Route certificate is valid for one year and may be renewed annually for two additional years upon the successful completion of the hiring district's induction program as part of the state's ADEPT program. To obtain professional certification at the end of the three-year American Board eligibility period, the individual must demonstrate teaching effectiveness through the ADEPT summative evaluation process and must present a passing score on the Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) examination, a pedagogy assessment approved by the SBE for certification purposes.

### **American Board Certificates Issued in 2018–19**

Individuals who pass the American Board examinations, obtain the *Classroom Ready* certificate and complete the South Carolina certification application process (application, official transcript(s), fee, and Federal Bureau of Investigation/State Law Enforcement Division clearance process) are issued an American Board Statement of Eligibility, which allows these individuals then to seek employment in a South Carolina public school or school district. The SCDE issues an Alternative Route certificate to an eligible American Board candidate upon confirmation of employment.

For the 2018–19 academic year, the most recent year for which complete data are available, ninety-five educators participating in American Board were issued an Alternative Route certificate in the approved content area(s) and were employed statewide in the districts as indicated. Table 1 indicates the number of certificates issued by content area over the last three academic years. There were increases in the number of educators certifying in mathematics, science, English, middle level language arts, and middle level science. Table 2 indicates the districts in which these American Board teachers were employed. Additionally, Table 2 shows a 23 percent overall increase in the number of American Board teachers employed and certified from the 2017–18 year to the 2018–19 year. Table 2 shows a widespread distribution of American Board teachers throughout the state in districts large and small, rural and urban. For the 2018–19 academic year, the districts employing the greatest number of teachers through this pathway were Charleston County School District and Horry County School District.

Table 1. *Number of American Board Certificates Issued by Certification Area*

| Certification Area         | 2016–17   | 2017–18   | 2018–19              |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------|
| Biology                    | 8         | 7         | 4                    |
| Chemistry                  | 0         | 1         | 1                    |
| English                    | 15        | 16        | 26                   |
| Mathematics                | 17        | 17        | 23                   |
| Physics                    | 0         | 0         | 0                    |
| Science                    | 15        | 13        | 18                   |
| Middle Level Mathematics   | 4         | 6         | 6                    |
| Middle Level Language Arts | 9         | 12        | 18                   |
| Middle Level Science       | 3         | 5         | 13                   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>71</b> | <b>77</b> | <b>109*</b> (Note 2) |

*Note:* 1. Certificates reflected in this table include those issued for American Board teachers in their first, second or third year of teaching. An educator’s first American Board certificate is issued upon a Confirmation of Employment, and the credential may be renewed for two additional years with continued employment. Upon successful completion of summative evaluation requirements and the required pedagogy exam, a teacher may advance to a standard Professional teaching certificate.

2. The SCDE issued these 109 certification areas to a total of 95 individuals. Passing scores on the American Board examinations of English, mathematics and science qualify participants for grades 5–12. For 2018–19, some school districts requested participants be issued a credential in both the middle level and high school certification fields for the same content area.

Table 2. *Number of Teachers with American Board Certificates by School District*

| District    | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 |
|-------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Abbeville   | 1       | 0       | 0       |
| Aiken       | 4       | 4       | 5       |
| Anderson 1  | 1       | 1       | 1       |
| Anderson 2  | 0       | 0       | 1       |
| Anderson 4  | 0       | 1       | 1       |
| Anderson 5  | 1       | 2       | 4       |
| Barnwell 45 | 0       | 1       | 1       |
| Beaufort    | 2       | 1       | 3       |
| Berkeley    | 7       | 7       | 6       |
| Charleston  | 9       | 11      | 8       |
| Cherokee    | 1       | 2       | 1       |
| Clarendon 2 | 0       | 0       | 1       |
| Colleton 1  | 1       | 1       | 1       |

| District                       | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Darlington                     | 1       | 0       | 0       |
| Dorchester 2                   | 1       | 2       | 4       |
| Edgefield                      | 1       | 0       | 1       |
| Florence 1                     | 2       | 2       | 2       |
| Florence 3                     | 0       | 0       | 0       |
| Florence 4                     | 1       | 0       | 0       |
| Florence 5                     | 0       | 0       | 1       |
| Georgetown                     | 2       | 0       | 1       |
| Greenville                     | 3       | 4       | 5       |
| Greenwood 50                   | 1       | 1       | 2       |
| Hampton                        | 1       | 0       | 0       |
| Horry                          | 3       | 6       | 9       |
| Lancaster                      | 1       | 0       | 0       |
| Laurens 56                     | 1       | 1       | 2       |
| Lexington 1                    | 1       | 1       | 2       |
| Lexington 2                    | 1       | 0       | 0       |
| Lexington 3                    | 0       | 0       | 1       |
| Marion 10                      | 0       | 1       | 0       |
| Newberry 01                    | 0       | 0       | 1       |
| Oconee                         | 4       | 2       | 1       |
| Orangeburg                     | 0       | 1       | 0       |
| Pickens                        | 1       | 2       | 1       |
| Richland 1                     | 1       | 1       | 2       |
| Richland 2                     | 0       | 0       | 2       |
| Spartanburg 2                  | 2       | 0       | 0       |
| Spartanburg 6                  | 2       | 0       | 0       |
| Spartanburg 7                  | 1       | 3       | 4       |
| Sumter                         | 4       | 3       | 3       |
| Union 1                        | 0       | 1       | 1       |
| York 3                         | 2       | 3       | 3       |
| York 4                         | 1       | 0       | 1       |
| Williston 29                   | 0       | 0       | 2       |
| Public Charter School District | 6       | 12      | 6       |
| Charter Institutue of Erskine  | 0       | 0       | 4       |

| District | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| TOTAL    | 71      | 77      | 95      |

*Note:* This table includes American Board teachers in their first, second, or third year of teaching. An educator’s first American Board certificate is issued upon confirmation of employment, and the credential may be renewed for two additional years with continued employment. Upon successful completion of summative evaluation requirements and the required pedagogy exam, a teacher may advance to the standard Professional teaching certificate.

## Teaching Effectiveness

All American Board participants must take part in South Carolina’s ADEPT system. During their first year in the classroom, American Board participants—like all other first year educators—participate in a formative evaluation process, which includes the district’s induction program and the assignment of a mentor. The purpose of this formative process is to provide the appropriate assistance and support to facilitate the beginning teacher’s effectiveness and classroom practice. While the intent is for teachers to complete the induction process during their first year of program participation, some are hired too late in the year to be placed on an induction contract. These individuals are employed on a Letter of Agreement but are still required to meet the induction and summative evaluation requirements specified for American Board participants in a subsequent year. Following participation in the induction process, American Board teachers must successfully complete summative evaluation requirements to be eligible for advancement to a Professional teaching certificate at the end of three years. Table 3 provides a summary of the ADEPT evaluation results for all teachers employed on a first, second, or third-year American Board certificate during the 2018–19 school year.

Table 3. *ADEPT Results for Teachers with American Board Certificates in the 2018–19 Academic Year*

| Contract Level      | ADEPT Process    | Total Teachers | Met       | Not Met  | Incomplete |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------|----------|------------|
| Letter of Agreement | Formative        | 2              | 2 (100%)  | 0 (0%)   | 0 (0%)     |
| Induction 1         | Formative        | 28             | 26 (93%)  | 1 (3.5%) | 1 (3.5%)   |
| Induction 2         | Formative        | 7              | 5 (72%)   | 1 (14%)  | 1 (14%)    |
| Annual 1            | Summative        | 35             | 34 (97%)  | 0 (0%)   | 1 (3%)     |
| Annual 2            | Summative or GBE | 14             | 14 (100%) | 0 (0%)   | 0 (0%)     |

*Note.* Data were retrieved from the SCDE ADEPT Data System for the 2018–19 academic year and include eighty-seven educators whose evaluation results were reported to the SCDE by employing school districts. One educator was put on a Continuing contract and was not included in the above table of results. Data for eight teachers were not reported. These educators were first year participants who became certified mid-year.

## Advancement to a Standard Professional Teaching Certificate

A total of twenty-one American Board participants advanced from an Alternative Route certificate to a standard Professional certificate following the 2018–19 academic year. In order to

advance, these educators had to maintain employment, meet all ADEPT evaluation requirements, and submit a successful score on the required pedagogy examination.