

**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 Teaching Excellence**

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

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

March 31, 2018

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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 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 for the Certification of Teaching Excellence (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, chemistry, English, mathematics, physics, 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 thirteen states that accept the American Board for initial certification purposes. The other states include Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Utah, and Wisconsin. The American Board indicates on its website that individuals may also be able to teach in independent and charter schools in some other states and countries.

The American Board recruits candidates through its website with a live-chat feature, through face-to-face information sessions in approved states, and in follow-up marketing e-mails with potential candidates. The full cost of the program is \$2,850; however, the American Board offers special pricing on a routine basis, and the advertised cost fluctuates based on weekly sales goals. The American Board offers candidates an installment plan, financial assistance, and a discounted rate for military veterans. The sales team receives a set commission for all individuals that they enroll in the program.

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) exam. These examinations 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.

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 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, South Carolina's adopted pedagogy exam.

American Board Certificates Issued in 2017–18

Individuals who pass the American Board examinations and who complete the South Carolina certification application process (application, fee, and FBI/SLED 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. An Alternate Route – American Board certificate is issued to an eligible candidate upon confirmation of employment.

For the 2017–18 academic year, sixty-nine educators have been issued an Alternate Route – American Board certificate in the following approved content areas and are employed statewide in the districts as indicated. Table 1 indicates the number of certificates issued by content areas over the last three academic years, and Table 2 indicates the districts in which American Board teachers to whom those certificates were issued are employed. Additionally, Table 1 shows an increase overall in the number of American Board teachers employed and certified over the last three years, with notable increases in all middle level content areas as well as high school science. Table 2 shows a widespread distribution of American Board teachers throughout the state in districts large and small, rural and urban. For the current academic year, the districts employing the greatest number of teachers through this pathway are Charleston and the Public Charter School District.

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

Certification Area	Number of American Board Certificates Issued		
	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18
Biology	6	7	6
Chemistry	2	0	1
English	16	12	12
Mathematics	14	14	16
Physics	0	0	0
Science	7	13	12
Middle Level Mathematics	1	5	4
Middle Level Language Arts	6	11	14
Middle Level Science	0	4	4
TOTAL	52	66	69

Note. Certificates reflected in this table may have been issued for teachers in their first, second, or third year of teaching. An educator’s first American Board certificate is issued upon confirmation of employment. The credential may be renewed for the second and third year of teaching prior to advancement to a Professional teaching certificate at the end of three years after successful completion of summative evaluation requirements.

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

School District	Number of American Board Candidates Employed		
	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18
Abbeville	0	1	0
Aiken	1	4	4
Anderson 1	0	1	1
Anderson 4	0	0	1
Anderson 5	2	1	1
Barnwell 45	0	0	1
Beaufort	1	2	1
Berkeley	6	7	6
Charleston	9	9	10
Cherokee	1	1	2
Chesterfield	1	0	0
Colleton 1	0	0	1
Darlington	2	1	0
Dorchester 2	0	1	2
Dorchester 4	1	0	0

School District	Number of American Board Candidates Employed		
	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18
Edgefield	2	0	0
Florence 1	2	2	2
Florence 4	0	1	0
Georgetown	1	2	0
Greenville	1	1	4
Greenwood	0	1	1
Hampton	0	1	0
Horry	4	3	6
Lancaster	1	1	0
Laurens 56	1	1	1
Lexington 1	0	1	0
Lexington 2	2	1	0
Marion 10	0	0	1
Oconee	3	5	2
Orangeburg 4	0	0	1
Pickens	1	1	2
Richland 1	0	1	1
Richland 2	1	0	0
Spartanburg 2	2	2	0
Spartanburg 6	1	2	0
Spartanburg 7	0	1	3
Sumter	1	4	3
Union 1	2	0	1
York 3	0	2	2
York 4	0	1	0
Public Charter School District	2	4	9
SC School for Deaf & Blind	1	0	0
TOTAL	52	66	69

Note. Certificates reflected in this table may have been issued for teachers in their first, second, or third year of teaching. An educator’s first American Board certificate is issued upon confirmation of employment. The credential may be renewed for the second and third year of teaching prior to advancement to a Professional teaching certificate at the end of three years after successful completion of summative evaluation requirements.

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 of all teachers employed on a first-, second-, or third-year American Board certificate during the 2016–17 school year. For comparison purposes, the statewide percentage of Induction teachers with an ADEPT result of Met for 2016–17 was 90 percent, and the statewide percentage of teachers with a result of Met at the Annual Summative level was also 90 percent.

Table 3. *ADEPT Results for Teachers with American Board Certificates in the 2016–17 Academic Year*

Contract Level	ADEPT Process	Total Teachers	Evaluation Results		
			Met	Not Met	Incomplete
Letter of Agreement	Formative	3	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Induction 1	Formative	32	28 (88%)	2 (6%)	2 (6%)
Induction 2	Formative	7	6 (86%)	0 (0%)	1 (14%)
Annual 1	Summative	12	11(92%)	0 (0%)	1 (8%)
Annual 2	Summative or GBE	1	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Note. First-year teachers with American Board certificates issued in 2017–18 are not reflected in this table since they were not employed during the 2016–17 school year. Data were retrieved from the SCDE ADEPT Data System for the 2016–17 academic year and include the fifty-five educators whose evaluation results were reported to the SCDE by employing school districts.

Advancement to a Standard Professional Teaching Certificate

Since the program’s inception in South Carolina in 2007, a total of 110 American Board participants have advanced from an Alternate Route – American Board credential to a Professional teaching certificate. In order to advance, these educators had to maintain employment, complete the three-year American Board program, meet all ADEPT evaluation requirements, and submit a successful score on the Principles of Learning and Teaching examination. Of these 110 teachers who advanced to a Professional certificate through

participation in American Board, 100 are still employed in South Carolina public schools. Table 4 provides a summary, by program entry year, of the American Board participants who have had the opportunity to complete three years in the program and advance to a Professional certificate. For each entry year, the table indicates the number of American Board participants issued an Alternate Route – American Board certificate, the number of those individuals who have advanced to a Professional credential, and the number still employed in a South Carolina public school or school district. Participants earning the first certificate in the 2015–16, 2016–17, and 2017–18 school years are not included in this table because they have not yet completed three full years of program participation necessary to advance to a Professional certificate. For example, in 2014–15, eighteen participants entered American Board, and of those participants sixteen (89 percent) earned their professional certificate in three years. Fifteen of the participants who entered the American Board pathway in 2014–15 are still teaching in South Carolina; this number represents 83 percent of the total participants entering in that year.

Table 4. *Status of American Board Participants with Opportunity to Complete Three-Year Program*

American Board Participants	Program Entry Year								Totals
	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	
Entered Alternate Pathway ^a	5	22	31	17	26	9	27	18	155
Earned Professional Certificate	3 (60%)	13 (59%)	19 (61%)	13 (76%)	16 (62%)	8 (89%)	22 (81%)	16 (89%)	110 (71%)
Still Teaching in SC ^b	2 (40%)	11 (50%)	17 (55%)	12 (71%)	12 (46%)	9 (100%)	22 (81%)	15 (83%)	100 (65%)

Note. ^aReflects total number of educators who entered the American Board pathway in the given school year. ^bReflects number of educators who entered the certification pathway in the given school year who were still teaching in a South Carolina public school at the beginning of the 2017–18 school year.

Looking Ahead

American Board representatives met with staff members in the SCDE Office of Educator Services in May 2017 to discuss programmatic updates and improvements, and the organization later provided feedback on the draft Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) guidelines currently under development by the SCDE. American Board reported in late summer that the organization was developing a clinical experience component to be added to new candidate training beginning with a pilot group in January 2018. The goal is that all first-year participants will be supported by the organization during a clinical experience beginning September 2018. This clinical experience will take place while participants are employed as teachers of record in South Carolina public schools or school districts. American Board will monitor these candidates in classroom practice over the course of the first year of employment and provide feedback and assistance as an extension of the online training candidates have completed.

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