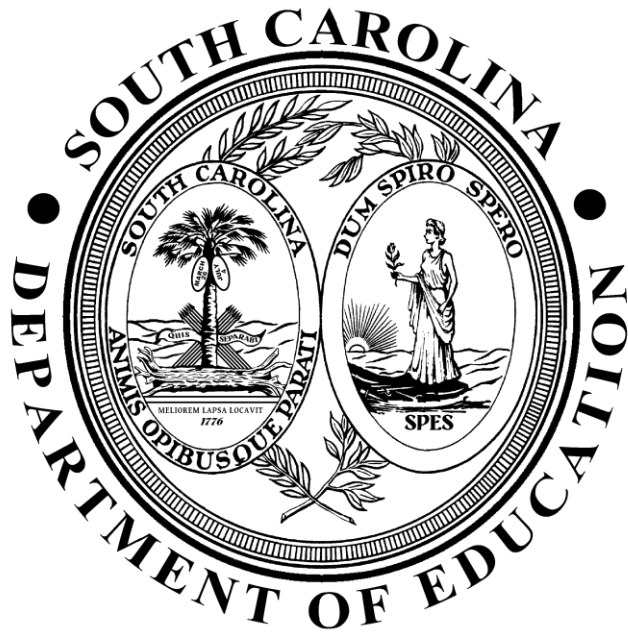


STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION



**Annual Report on the American Board for the Certification of
Teacher Excellence for the 2020-21 School Year**

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

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

March 8, 2022

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Reporting Requirement

Pursuant to 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 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 (ABCTE) is a nonprofit 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 secondary certification areas for the program include: biology, chemistry, English, mathematics, physics, and science. American Board also offers the middle level subject areas of language arts, mathematics, and science. Previously known as ABCTE, the organization is currently known as American Board and is based in Atlanta, Georgia.

South Carolina is one of 14 states that accepts American Board for initial certification purposes. Other states that utilize this program include: Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Mississippi, Missouri, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Utah, and Wisconsin.

The American Board website describes the program as self-paced and indicates that most candidates complete the program of study for the exams within an average of seven to ten months. The full cost of the program may be up to \$2,850. Candidates may utilize a payment plan for program costs. The provider appears to offer special pricing frequently, and the advertised cost fluctuates. As of February 2021, American Board offers a one-time payment promotional price of \$1,900.

The American Board program is solely online and consists of study materials to prepare candidates to 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 or the alignment of these tests to national content area and teaching standards. The exams have not been correlated to other certification examinations, including the Praxis series approved for certification purposes in South Carolina. The American Board website indicates that study materials prepare candidates for the exams; no information is provided on the how the program and exams prepare candidates for classroom practice.

The American Board in South Carolina

S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-330 states that a person who has received an American Board 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 as part of the state's ADEPT program. To advance to a Professional certificate 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 2020-21

Individuals who pass the American Board examinations, obtain the American Board certificate, and complete the South Carolina application for certification process (application, official transcript(s), fee, and fingerprint-based criminal history reports) are issued an American Board Statement of Eligibility. This item allows participants to seek employment in a South Carolina public school or public charter school district. The SCDE issues an Alternate Route certificate to an eligible American Board candidate upon a confirmation of employment.

In July 2020, the SCDE approved the issuance of a Temporary Alternative Route certificate for the 2020-21 school year to eligible candidates. The Temporary certificate provided a one-year, non-renewable certificate option for an individual who had completed all requirements to participate in an approved alternative route program except for one or more certification assessments required by the State Board of Education. For 2020-21, the most recent year for which complete data are available, 34 first year educators were certified through American Board. Eight first year participants were issued a Temporary certificate. Twenty-six first year teachers held the Alternate Route certificate during the same year. For the current 2021-22 school year, five Temporary certificate holders from the previous academic year were issued an Alternate Route certificate. The Temporary certificate holders advanced to the Alternate Route certificate with qualifying examination scores on American Board's content area and Professional Teaching Knowledge (PTK) tests and continued employment in a South Carolina public school district.

Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, some third-year American Board participants were unable to complete all requirements for the Professional certificate at the end of the 2019-20 school year due to incomplete ADEPT results or closures of testing centers. Under flexibility granted by the Superintendent of Education, the SCDE offered an additional Alternate Route certificate for the 2020-21 school year to 12 American Board teachers at the request of employing school districts. During the final extension year, each educator had to complete all remaining requirements for advancement to the Professional certificate.

For the 2020-21 academic year, the most recent year for which complete data are available, 114 educators participating in American Board were issued an Alternate Route or Temporary certificate statewide. 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 middle level mathematics and middle level language arts.

Table 1. Number of American Board Certificates Issued by Certification Field and Year

Certification Field	2018–19	2019–20	2020-21
Biology	3	4	4
Chemistry	1	1	1
English	25	18	20
Mathematics	18	24	24
Physics	0	0	0
Science	13	15	16
Middle Level Mathematics	6	4	8
Middle Level Language Arts	15	24	28
Middle Level Science	14	13	13
TOTAL	95	103	114

Note. Certificates reflected in this table include those issued for American Board teachers in their first, second, third, or final extension year of teaching. Source: South Carolina Department of Education educator certification and information system (2021, December).

Table 2 indicates where the American Board teachers were employed by districts over three school years. For the past two academic years, the districts employing the greatest number of teachers through this pathway are Horry County Schools and Greenville County Schools.

Table 2. American Board Teachers Employed by District and Year

School District	2018–19	2019–20	2020-21
Abbeville	0	1	1
Aiken	5	0	1
Allendale	0	0	1
Anderson 1	1	2	2
Anderson 2	1	1	0
Anderson 4	1	1	0
Anderson 5	4	3	3
Barnwell 45	1	1	1
Beaufort	3	5	4
Berkeley	6	7	7
Charleston	8	6	7
Cherokee	1	2	2
Chester	0	3	2
Chesterfield	0	1	1
Clarendon 2	1	1	1
Clarendon 3	0	0	1
Colleton	1	2	1
Darlington	0	2	3

School District	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Dorchester 2	4	4	5
Edgefield	1	2	0
Florence 1	2	0	0
Florence 3	0	1	0
Florence 5	1	1	2
Georgetown	1	2	3
Greenville	5	7	10
Greenwood 50	2	2	1
Horry	9	9	9
Kershaw	0	1	1
Lancaster	0	2	2
Laurens 56	2	2	2
Lexington 1	2	2	5
Lexington 2	0	0	2
Lexington 3	1	0	0
Lexington 5	0	0	1
Newberry	1	1	2
Oconee	1	1	1
Orangeburg	0	1	1
Pickens	1	4	4
Richland 1	2	2	2
Richland 2	2	2	3
Spartanburg 5	0	1	1
Spartanburg 6	0	2	2
Spartanburg 7	4	3	2
Sumter	3	0	0
Union	1	1	1
York 3 (Rock Hill)	3	2	2
York 4 (Fort Mill)	1	1	1
Williston 29	2	0	0
Public Charter School District	6	4	3
Charter Institute of Erskine	4	4	6
TOTAL	95	103	114

Note. This table includes American Board teachers in their first, second, third, or final extension year of teaching. Source: Source: South Carolina Department of Education educator certification and information system (2021, December).

Teaching Effectiveness

All American Board participants must take part in South Carolina’s ADEPT system. During their first year in the classroom, American Board 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 in a subsequent year. Following participation in the induction process, American Board teachers must successfully complete the summative evaluation requirements to be eligible for advancement to a Professional teaching certificate at the end of their program.

Table 3 provides a summary of the ADEPT evaluation results for all teachers employed on a first, second, third, or final extension year American Board certificate during the 2020-21 school year.

Table 3. 2020-21 ADEPT Results for Teachers with American Board Certificates

Contract Level	ADEPT Process	Total Teachers	Evaluation Results Met	Evaluation Results Not Met	Evaluation Results Incomplete
Letter of Agreement	Formative	2	2	0	0
Induction 1	Formative	34	32	1	1
Induction 2	Formative	5	5	0	0
Annual 1	Summative	37	36	0	1
Annual 2	Summative or GBE	16	15	0	1
Annual 3	Summative or GBE	6	5	0	1

Note. Table 3 includes 100 educators whose evaluation results were reported to the SCDE by employing school districts. Data are not included for nine teachers whose districts reported results associated with a contract level for which the teachers were not eligible. South Carolina teachers may not be employed on a continuing contract until they are eligible for a standard Professional certificate. Districts did not report evaluation results for five participants. Source: Source: South Carolina Department of Education educator certification and information system (2021, December).

Advancement to a Standard Professional Teaching Certificate

During 2020-21, there was a total of 34 American Board participants in their third year. Of these participants, 25 third year teachers met all requirements and advanced from the Alternate Route certificate to a standard Professional certificate at the conclusion of the school year.

Additionally, there were 12 participants on a final extension during the 2020-21 school year. Eleven of these participants moved to a Professional certificate at the conclusion of the school term. To advance, these educators had to maintain employment, meet all ADEPT evaluation requirements, and submit a qualifying score on the required pedagogy examination.

Due to the continuing COVID-19 public health emergency, some third year participants were unable to complete all requirements for a Professional certificate at the conclusion of the 2020-21 school year. The SCDE extended an additional Alternate Route certificate for the 2021-22 school year to seven third year American Board educators at the request of employing school districts. During the extension year, each educator must complete all remaining requirements for advancement to the Professional certificate.

Table 4. *2020-21 Advancement to a Professional Certificate for American Board Teachers*

Year in Program	Total Teachers	Issued Professional After 20-21	Granted Final Year Extension for 21-22
Third Year	34	25	7
Final Year Extension	12	11	Not applicable

Note. In 2020-21, 12 educators held an American Board final year extension certificate. 11 educators completed their requirements and moved to a Professional certificate. These final year certificate holders could not be granted any additional extensions for school year 2021-22. Source: Source: South Carolina Department of Education educator certification and information system (2021, December).