



2023-24 Annual Report on Certification through Teach for America

Pursuant to the Teach for America Guidelines

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Introduction

On October 13, 2010, the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted a resolution to support bringing Teach for America (TFA) to South Carolina beginning with the 2011–12 school year. This resolution was adopted to address a goal of recruiting, retaining, and distributing highly effective teachers throughout South Carolina, especially in rural school districts. The SBE subsequently approved implementation guidelines for TFA South Carolina in December 2010 and amended the guidelines in April 2014.

The mission of this nationwide, non-profit organization is to promote an equitable education for all children by recruiting and supporting promising future leaders to make a two-year commitment to teach in rural or urban school districts throughout the country. Beyond the two-year commitment, corps members are encouraged to continue their support and advocacy for educational opportunities for all children. Upon selection through a national application process, TFA corps members are assigned to a regional affiliate such as TFA South Carolina and seek employment in partner schools and districts. Pursuant to the SBE-approved implementation guidelines, South Carolina corps members must teach in a TFA partner school or district during their two-year commitment. Beyond this commitment, a TFA South Carolina participant has the option to remain teaching in a public school district in the state on a conditional (i.e., Alternative Route) certificate and meet additional requirements to advance to a standard Professional credential. These additional requirements must be met within three years. Funding for TFA South Carolina is provided through private donors, school districts partners, and an annual appropriation from the General Assembly.

Pursuant to SBE guidelines, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) provides this annual report on TFA South Carolina for the 2023–24 school year, the last year for which complete data is available. Measures indicated in the guidelines include participant certificate numbers by program year, certification field, employing district, retention data during the two-year commitment, classroom performance evaluation, student learning data, and employer satisfaction data.

TFA South Carolina Partner Districts and Schools

The SBE must approve partner districts or schools for the TFA South Carolina program. The original partner school districts were approved in April 2011. Table 1 outlines the TFA partner school districts by approval date. Districts marked with an asterisk maintained an active partnership with TFA South Carolina during the 2023–24 school year.

Table 1. TFA Partner Districts by SBE Approval Dates

Approval Date	District
April 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chesterfield County School District• Clarendon County School Districts One, Two, and Three• Darlington County School District*

Approval Date	District
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dillon County School District Four • Florence County School Districts One*, Two, Three*, Four, and Five • Lee County School District • Marion County School Districts One, Two, and Seven • Marlboro County School District • Orangeburg Consolidated School District Five (now Orangeburg County School District) • Williamsburg County School District
May 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orangeburg Three (now Orangeburg County School District)* • Charleston County Schools*
June 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berkeley County School District* • Colleton County Schools* • Dillon School District Three • Marion County Schools
June 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lee County School District <p>Note. Lee County was approved as an original partner district in 2011; however, the district did not begin an active partnership with TFA until the 2014–15 school year.</p>
April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legacy Early College (SC Public Charter School District) *
May 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Street Schools–Spartanburg Seven
June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liberty STEAM (SC Public Charter School District)*
February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allendale County School District (beginning with the 2024–25 school year)

Certification Process

Year One

As part of an approved alternative route preparation program, an eligible first-year TFA corps member is issued a one-year Alternative Route certificate in the designated classroom teaching field. In order to be issued the first one-year credential, the candidate must submit the following documentation to the SCDE Office of Educator Services:

- certification application and fee;
- official transcript verifying an earned bachelor’s degree or higher from a regionally accredited college or university;
- official qualifying score on the subject area assessment(s) required by the SBE for certification.
- verification of candidacy by TFA;
- confirmation of employment as a full-time teacher in the qualifying subject area;
- verification of successful completion of the approved TFA pre-service orientation and training program;

- fingerprint-based criminal history review pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-115; and
- completion of the Darkness to Light Stewards of Children Child Abuse Prevention Training Program.

Year Two

With documentation of successful progress in the program and continued employment in a partner school or district, a corps member will be issued a second one-year Alternative Route certificate.

Year Three

Pursuant to SBE guidelines, a corps member has the option to remain teaching in South Carolina beyond the two-year TFA commitment and complete additional requirements to advance to a standard Professional educator certificate. These requirements include:

- successful completion of the state’s summative evaluation of teaching performance;
- a passing score on the pedagogy assessment required for certification; and
- successful completion of nine hours of approved graduate level course work.

To be issued the third one-year certificate, the candidate’s hiring school district must submit a confirmation of employment to the SCDE.

Year Four

If unable to complete all requirements to advance to a Professional certificate by the end of the third year, a participant may request a final one-year Alternative Route certificate with confirmation of employment and a letter of support from the employing school district.

2023-24 TFA Certification Data

Program Year One

TFA South Carolina did not recruit new candidates during 2023–24 due to personnel changes in the organization and to restructuring of the state program. As a result, no first-year corps members were placed in South Carolina school districts. One second-year corps member, first assigned during the 2022–23 school year, met requirements for issuance of the first Alternative Route certificate for the 2023–24 school year. Teach for America resumed recruiting corps beginning with the 2024–25 school year.

Program Year Two

For the 2023–24 academic year, the SCDE issued a second-year Alternative Route certificate to 13 of the 16 TFA corps members originally assigned to South Carolina for 2022–23.

Program Year Three

Ten corps members who began their participation with South Carolina TFA during the 2021–22 school year opted to remain teaching beyond their two-year commitment and pursue a standard Professional certificate. At the conclusion of the 2023–24 school year, five of the ten educators advanced to a Professional certificate. One participant has been issued an extension year certificate for 2024–25 to complete certification requirements.

Program Year Four

The SCDE issued a fourth-year Alternative Route certificate to three individuals who entered the TFA program in South Carolina during the 2020–21 school year. At the close of the previous academic year, two educators advanced to a Professional certificate.

Certificates Issued for 2023–24

The SCDE issued a total of 27 Alternative Route certificates to eligible Teach for America participants during the 2023–24 school year. Additional information is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. TFA Certificates Issued for 2023–24 by Program Year

Program Year	Entry Year	Beginning Cohort Size	Certificates Issued in 23-24
1	2023–24	0	1
2	2022–23	16	13
3	2021–22	27	10
4	2020–21	42	3
Total			27

Notes. If a candidate does not meet all requirements to advance to a standard Professional certificate at the end of year three, the candidate has an option of a one-year extension with documentation of successful progress and continued employment. No TFA Corps were assigned to South Carolina for the 2023–24 academic year. One teacher met requirements to be issued their first Teach for America Alternate Route certificate. This individual was assigned to the South Carolina Corps in 2022–23; however, they did not qualify for their first certificate until the 2023–24 school year. Source: South Carolina Department of Education educator certification information system (2024, November).

Certificates Issued by Subject Area/Certification Field

Table 3 indicates the number of Teach for America Alternate Route certificates issued by content area during the past academic year. The greatest number of certificates were issued in the subject area of elementary.

Table 3. TFA Alternative Route Certificates Issued for 2023–24 by Certification Field

Certification Field	Certificates Issued
Early Childhood	4
Elementary	11
Middle Level Language Arts	4
Middle Level Mathematics	2
Middle Level Social Studies	1

Certification Field	Certificates Issued
Music	1
Social Studies	1
Special Education: Multi-categorical	3
Total	27

Notes. Certificates reflected in this table include those issued for TFA teachers in their first, second, third, or final extension year of teaching. Source: South Carolina Department of Education educator certification and information system (2024, November).

Employing Districts

During their two-year program commitment, TFA corps members must be employed in a partner school or school district approved by the SBE. TFA teachers who wish to pursue a Professional certificate by exercising the third- and fourth-year option allowed in program guidelines may be employed in any South Carolina public school district. Table 4 indicates where the Teach for America educators were employed by district. Last year, Charleston County School District employed the greatest number of TFA teachers.

Table 4. TFA Alternative Route Certificates Issued by Employing District

Public School or District	Number of TFA Participants Employed
Berkeley*	3
Charleston*	7
Colleton*	3
Darlington*	3
Dorchester Two	1
Florence One*	1
Florence Three*	2
Orangeburg*	1
Legacy Early College* or Liberty STEAM* (located in SC Public Charter School District)	4
SC Public Charter District	2
Total	27

Notes. The asterisk denotes districts or schools who hold active partnerships with TFA. This table includes TFA teachers in their first, second, third, fourth, or final extension year of teaching. Source: Source: South Carolina Department of Education educator certification and information system (2024, November).

Teaching Performance Evaluation and Student Learning Data

During their two-year commitment, TFA corps members must be employed on an Induction contract and participate in a formative evaluation process as part of the state’s expanded system for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching (ADEPT). In the event a corps member will not be employed by the twenty-eighth student attendance day, the educator is eligible for employment on a Letter of Agreement and must be provided formative support. Employing districts must meet all SBE requirements for induction and mentoring, consistent with requirements for other beginning teachers.

During their two-year commitment, corps members are also supported by TFA mentors and may receive additional training and assistance through the program provider. During year one, TFA corps members participate in their employing district’s induction program and must be assigned an appropriately trained mentor. During their second year of employment, TFA teachers must continue to be employed under an Induction contract and must participate in a formative evaluation process based upon their identified performance strengths and areas for growth. This formative evaluation process may include all or selected components of a state-approved summative evaluation model. However, the results of any summative components may be used only for formative feedback purposes and may not be applied toward certificate advancement.

Corps members who opt to pursue a standard educator certificate after their two-year commitment must be employed on an Annual contract in year three and participate in a summative (i.e., formal) evaluation process. If the evaluation results are not met or the process is incomplete, the educator will have the option to attempt the evaluation process again during an extension year provided that the teacher has continued employment and district support. As with all other beginning teachers, TFA participants must successfully complete summative evaluation requirements at the Annual contract level to be eligible for advancement to a Professional certificate.

Table 5. TFA ADEPT Performance Evaluation Data for 2023–24

Contract Level	Evaluation Process	Total Teachers	Results Met	Results Not Met	Results Incomplete	Results No Data
Induction 1	Formative	2	1	1	0	0
Induction 2	Formative	6	6	0	0	0
Annual 1	Summative	11	10	0	1	0
Annual 2	Summative	2	2	0	0	0
Annual 2	Goals-based	3	3	0	0	0
Letter of Agreement	Goals-Based	1	1	0	0	0

Notes. Data is not included in the table for one teacher who did not receive an ADEPT evaluation and one teacher whose district reported a result associated with a contract level for which the teacher was not eligible. South Carolina teachers may not be employed on a Continuing Contract until they are eligible for a standard Professional certificate. Source: South Carolina Department of Education teacher performance evaluation data system. (2024, November).

Impact on Student Learning

As part of the expanded ADEPT system, South Carolina teachers engage in a process of establishing a student learning objective (SLO) for a group of learners and then design instructional sequences and assessments, administer one or more formative assessments, deliver instruction, and facilitate learning, and then administer summative

assessments. Through the SLO process, teachers can evaluate the impact of their instruction on student learning relative to the objective, reflect on their instructional practice, build upon strengths, and identify areas for continued growth. Each SLO is completed over an extended period of the academic year, and teachers work with school-based leaders to develop and evaluate their SLOs. The SLO data reported by school districts for TFA participants during 2023–24 is summarized below.

Table 6. TFA SLO Rating Data for 2023–24

Contract Level	Exemplary	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Not Reported
Induction 1	0	1	1	0	0
Induction 2	0	4	2	0	0
Annual 1	1	9	0	0	1
Annual 2	2	1	2	0	0
Letter of Agreement	0	1	0	0	0
Total	3	16	5	0	1

Notes: Districts submitted SLO data for 26 TFA participants. One participant did not receive an SLO. Additionally, one teacher’s district reported a result associated with a contract level for which the teacher was not eligible. South Carolina teachers may not be employed on a Continuing Contract until they are eligible for a standard Professional certificate. Source: South Carolina Department of Education teacher performance evaluation data system (2024, November).

Employer Satisfaction Data

TFA administers an employer satisfaction survey biennially. The most recent survey was conducted in the spring of 2024, and results are available from TFA South Carolina.