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SC Teacher Supply and Demand: An Increase in Teacher Departures Leads to Record Number of Positions Still Vacant After School Year Starts

Rock Hill – The Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) has released its 2021-22 South Carolina (SC) Annual Educator Supply and Demand Report. Approximately 6,900 teachers from 2020-21 did not return to a teaching/service position in the same district for the 2021-22 school year. This is a 15.5% increase compared to the number of departures reported last year. In the report, teaching positions are held by certified educators who provide instruction in a classroom setting, and service positions are held by those who provide instruction and/or support directly to students in a school setting. School counselors, librarians, psychologists, and speech language pathologists are examples of educators in service positions.

Although the number of departures increased overall, resignations among early-career teachers were not as prevalent this year with 35% who had five or fewer years of classroom experience (in any state) and 12% with one year or less. The percentages reported last year were 42% and 16%, respectively. Of the first-year teachers hired for the 2020-21 school year, 30% did not return to a teaching/service position in the same district in 2021-22. This percentage is down from 36% last year. Fewer departures among educators in their first years of teaching indicate an improvement on some level, but at the same time, may suggest a larger problem as more veteran, non-retired teachers were reported as leaving their position this year.

Districts reported a 52% increase in the number of vacant teaching/service positions for 2021-22 compared to last year. As of September/October this year, there were 1,063 vacancies in SC public schools. This signifies the largest number of vacancies reported by districts since the Supply and Demand Survey was first administered in 2001. Many factors can explain such a drastic increase in the number of vacant positions, including the rise in teacher departures. While most of the vacancies created by these departures are filled with new hires prior to the beginning of each school year, some remain empty.

CERRA will request mid-year data from districts again in February 2022 to assess any additional teacher departures and/or positions that may still be vacant at the time.

The SC Annual Educator Supply and Demand Report can be accessed on the CERRA website at <https://www.cerra.org/supply-and-demand.html>.