

K-12 Teacher Shortage in the South: What the Data and District Leaders Say

A regional snapshot of K-12 educator **supply, demand**, and administrator perceptions
— drawn from **longitudinal data of 116 Southern districts** that used Frontline's
Recruiting & Hiring platform between 2019 and 2024.

District Leaders Weigh In: Staffing Pressures Across the South

Fewer districts in the South reported experiencing a teacher shortage compared to the [national average](#) (57% vs. 66%), but important variations exist within the region:

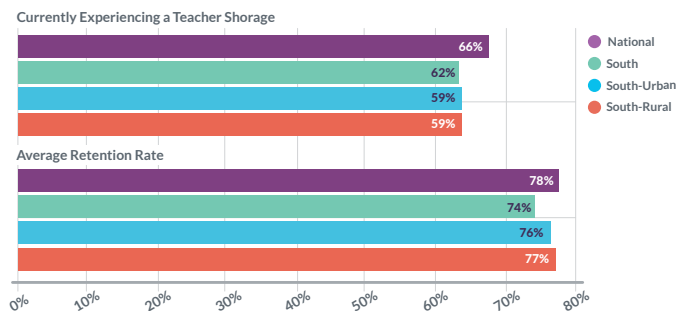
- **64% of urban districts** reported shortages, slightly below the national average.
- **Rural districts** were least likely to report shortages, at **52%**.

On the retention front, the South met or exceeded national averages:

- The regional retention rate was **78%**, matching the national average.
- **Urban districts** reported **82%** retention.
- **Rural districts** led with **83%** -- both outperforming national trends.

These numbers suggest that while some Southern districts still face staffing pressures, **strong retention is helping offset broader shortage concerns**, particularly in rural communities.

Teacher Shortage & Retention in the South vs. National Average



Recruiting & Hiring: Perception of Change

When asked about recruiting and hiring:

- **51%** districts said it has become more difficult – among the highest across regions.
- **32%** reported no change.
- **16%** said it has become easier – one of the highest “easier” responses nationwide.

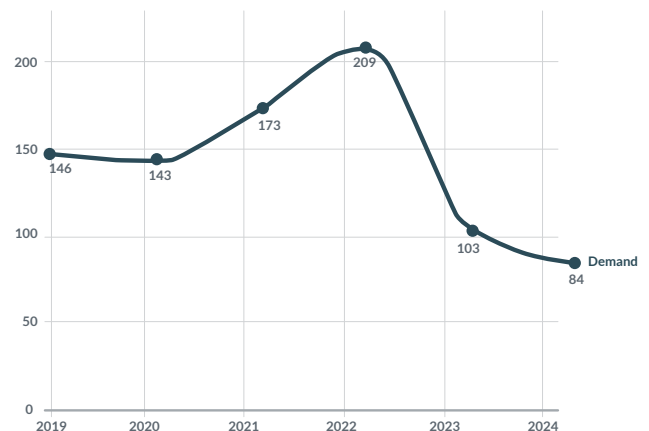
This blend of challenge and optimism reflects a **shifting landscape**, possibly supported by the South’s strong teacher retention.

Labor Market Trends from Frontline Recruiting & Hiring

This snapshot of K-12 staffing in the South is based on longitudinal data from over 100 districts using Frontline’s Recruiting & Hiring platform between 2019 and 2024.

Hiring Demand: Postings per District

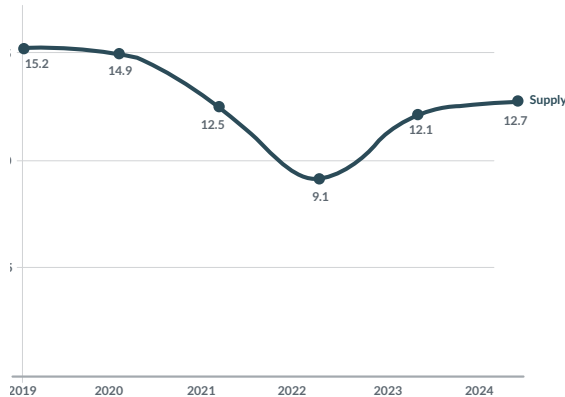
- Postings remained steady from **146 (2019)** to **143 (2020)**.
- Demand then surged: **173 in 2021**, peaking at **209 in 2022** – likely fueled by **ESSER-funded recovery roles** in academics, mental health, and operations.
- Since then, postings have dropped sharply: **103 in 2023**, and **84 in 2024** – the lowest level in six years.



Candidate Supply: Applicants per Posting

- The region started at **15.2 applicants per posting in 2019**, dipped to **9.1** in 2022 – the lowest in six years.
- Supply has since rebounded to **12.1 in 2023**, and **12.7 in 2024** – nearly reaching pre-pandemic levels.

This recovery suggests **growing interest in K-12 roles**, and potential relief for districts after years of lean applicant pools.



Where Perception Meets Reality

District leaders in the South continue to feel pressure, and **51%** say hiring is still harder than before. But the data shows a dynamic shift underway:

- **Job postings have declined sharply**, following a surge in ESSER-funded hiring.
- **Applicant volume is rebounding**, indicating a possible return of educators to the field.
- **Retention is strong**, across the region.

Together, these trends reflect a region where **conditions are stabilizing** and districts may be on the path toward a more balanced, long-term labor market.

How Frontline Helps Districts Take Action

Frontline's purpose-built K-12 solutions turn insights into strategy – helping districts navigate the current labor market and plan for what's next:

- Track historical posting and applicant trends to time recruiting efforts effectively.
- Automate key workflows to reduce admin burden and appeal to today's educators.
- Benchmark against peer districts for regional context and smarter decisions.
- Strengthen retention through personalized, flexible professional learning that supports long-term growth.



About Frontline Education

Frontline Education is the leading provider of school administration software, empowering K-12 leaders with the right tools, data and insights to proactively manage human capital, business operations and special education. Educational organizations representing over 80,000 schools and millions of educators, administrators and support personnel have partnered with Frontline Education in their efforts to develop the next generation of learners.



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