

# Teacher Pension Policy in South Carolina

A report card on the sustainability, flexibility and fairness of state teacher pension systems

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For more information about South Carolina and other states' teacher retirement policies, including full narrative analyses, recommendations and state responses, see [www.nctq.org/statePolicy](http://www.nctq.org/statePolicy)

## South Carolina's pension system ratings

### Sustainability

Pension system is stable and well-funded.



### Flexibility

Pension system is flexible and fair to all teachers.



### Neutrality

Retiree benefits to teachers accrue uniformly with each additional year of work.



● fully meets goal  
 ◐ nearly meets goal  
 ◑ meets goal in part  
 ◒ meets a small part of goal  
 ○ does not meet goal

## Snapshot of South Carolina's pension system

Teacher pension system is well-funded (at least 90%).	<b>NO</b>
Teachers have the option of a fully portable primary pension plan.	<b>YES</b>
Teachers vest in three years or less.	<b>NO</b>
Teachers leaving early can take at least a partial employer contribution with them.	<b>NO</b>
Teacher and employer contribution rates are reasonable.	<b>NO</b>
Retirement eligibility is based on age only.	<b>YES</b> (DC only)
Pension benefits accrue in a way that treats each year of work uniformly.	<b>YES</b> (DC only)

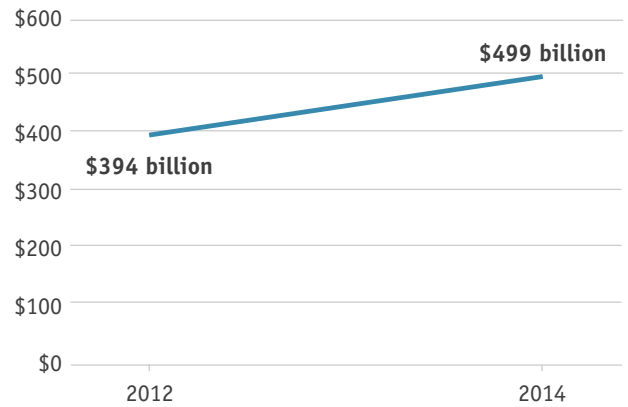
## South Carolina's pension system characteristics

Type of plan	Choice of Defined benefit (DB) or Defined contribution (DC)
Unfunded liabilities (percent of system funded)*	\$8,489,344,990 (64.7%)
Vesting period	8 years (DB)/Immediate (DC)
Teacher contribution rate (percent of salary)	8%
Employer contribution rate (percent of salary)	10.9%
Basis for retirement eligibility	Years of service (DB)/Any age (DC)
Cost of living adjustments (DB)	Fixed (automatic)
Participation in Social Security	Yes
Contributions teachers may withdraw from plans if they leave after 5 years (DB)	Own with interest
Policy for purchasing time for prior teaching or approved leave (DB)	Unlimited (prior teaching); Limited (approved leave)
Cost per teacher of allowing retirement before age 65 (DB)	\$557,874

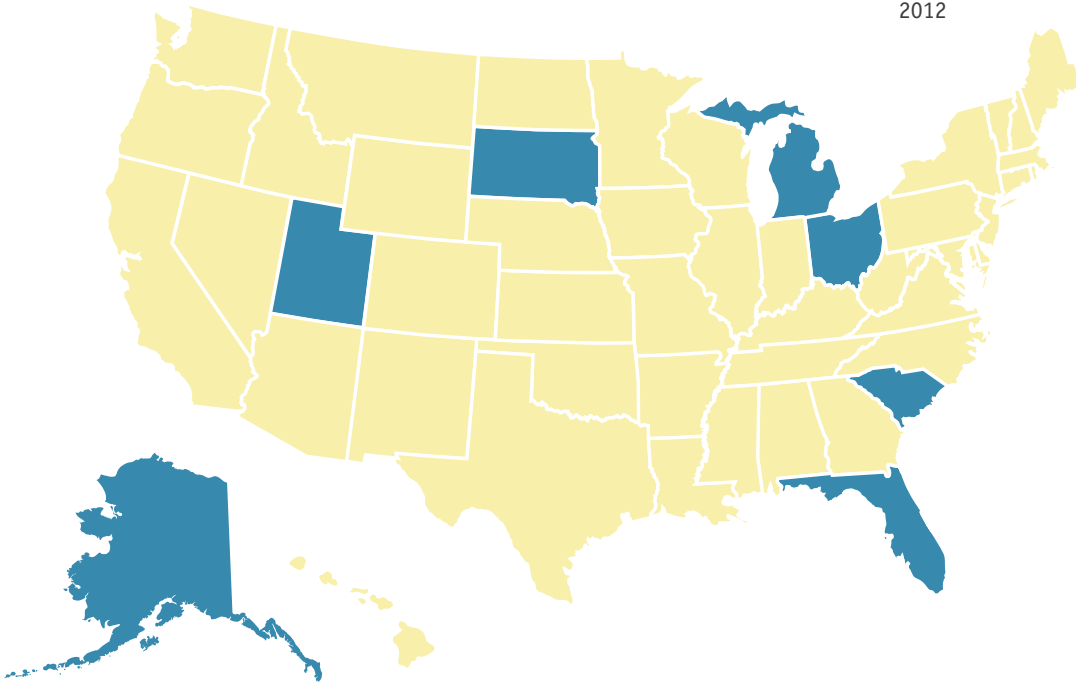
\* For states in which teachers are part of a larger public employee system, the liabilities were adjusted to reflect an estimate of the percentage of teachers in the system.

# Teacher pension trends in the U.S.

Teacher pension system debt has reached a half trillion dollars.

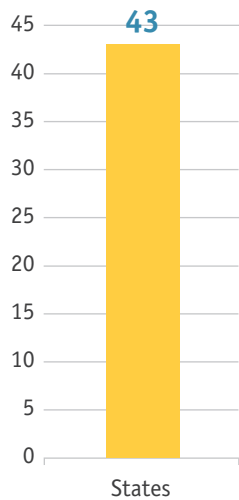


Just seven states offer a fully or nearly fully portable primary pension plan for teachers.

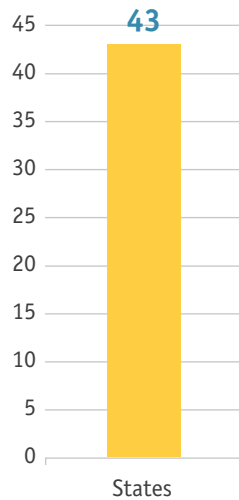


Other indicators also reflect worrisome trends.

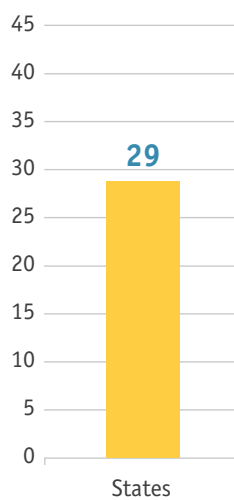
Number of states where pension funding ratios have decreased since 2008



Number of states that require excessive contributions of teachers, employers or both



Number of states that have increased teacher contribution rates since 2008



Number of states that have ten-year teacher vesting periods

