https://www.fauquier.com/news/fauquier-county-schools-grapple-with-high-teacher-vacancies-ahead-of-the-first-day-of-school/article_37472588-8694-4d67-9f63-518aab63c8dc.html

Fauquier County schools grapple with high teacher vacancies ahead of the first day of school

By Sarah Dolgin Staff Writer
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Fauquier County Public Schools leaders are dealing with increased teacher vacancies as students get ready to return to class this week.

The county is set to begin a new school year Wednesday with 92 staff vacancies, including 53 open teaching positions. That is the highest number of vacancies in August in the last five years, **according to data presented at the Aug. 4 school board meeting**.

Last August, the district reported 43 teacher vacancies during the first week of school, the highest number since August 2021, when there were 40, amid turmoil caused by the then-ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, according to both local and state data. The 43 vacancies last year made up about 5.3% of classroom teaching positions.



The division has not provided additional information about this year's staff requested by the Fauquier Times.

Schools have been reducing the number of open positions from the previous month even with the shortage. In July, there were even more vacancies, according to the division's monthly human resources: 68 open teaching positions and 131 total vacancies.

Liberty High School in Bealeton and Pearson Elementary in Catlett have the most open teaching positions of the county's schools currently. As of Aug. 4, Liberty had 10 open teaching positions, and Pearson had six.

Special education teachers and teaching assistants have been the hardest to hire, with 26 open special education positions reported across Fauquier County schools this month.

Fauquier County Public Schools aren't alone.

In March, the Virginia Department of Education **reported more than 3,000 open teaching positions across the state**. More than a quarter of the teacher vacancies were in the Northern Virginia region, according to state data.

Fauquier County had about 35 open teaching positions throughout the 2024-25 school year, according to state data as of March — or a 4.4% teacher vacancy rate, which was much higher than the average teacher vacancy rate of 2.5% in the Northern Virginia region for the 2024-25 school year.

At the Fauquier County Board of Supervisors meeting in July, tensions surfaced between supervisors and school officials over how to spend an additional $1.2 million in state funding.

School officials emphasized a need to boost pay to reduce the number of teachers leaving for school divisions that offer higher salaries, but supervisors saw the health insurance funding gap as a bigger priority.



At the Aug. 4 school board meeting, the school board amended its fiscal year 2026 budget to include a 0.66% salary bump for school employees, not including school administrators, who are on a different pay scale.

Last school year, the schools also launched a series of incentives for hard-to-fill positions, including additional stipends for special education teachers and a “retiree incentive” program that could encourage recently retired teachers to return to the classroom.

After multiple emails and phone calls, the Fauquier Times was unable to reach the school division for comment.

Staff writer Kaitlyn Salazar contributed to this report.

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