



Critical Shortage Key Considerations

Before Hiring a Retiree in a Critical Shortage Position

Critical shortage positions are determined in two ways:

- The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) establishes critical shortage areas for teachers each school year. [View VDOE's critical shortage areas for the current school year.](#)
- The school division can designate principal, assistant principal, specialized student support positions and bus drivers as critical shortage if they received three or fewer qualified applicants when recruiting for a position.

There are three types of critical shortage positions:

- **Teachers:** Includes teachers, principals and assistant principals.
- **Specialized Student Support Positions:** Includes positions employed by the school board such as school social workers, school psychologists, school nurses, licensed behavior analysts, licensed assistant behavior analysts, speech-language pathologists and other licensed health and behavioral positions as determined by VDOE and the *Code of Virginia*.
- **Bus Drivers.**

To be considered for a critical shortage position, a retiree must:

- Be retired from an eligible VRS-covered position. Members of the State Police Officers' Retirement System, the Virginia Law Officers' Retirement System and the Judicial Retirement System are not eligible.
- Be hired by a Virginia public school division in a designated critical shortage position.
- Hold a license for the position by the Virginia Board of Education or per the *Code of Virginia*.
- Have a break in service of at least six consecutive months between the retirement date and the date work begins in the critical shortage position. This break in service means not working in any full-time, part-time or volunteer position, including coaching and substitute teaching, with any VRS-participating employer, or working for a contractor with any VRS-participating employer.
- Not have retired with a reduced VRS benefit under an early retirement incentive program (ERIP).
- Not have retired under the Transitional Benefits Program or the Workforce Transition Act with an enhanced monthly VRS benefit.
- Not be on VRS disability retirement.
- Not have a prearranged commitment, either verbal or written, with the school division before the employee's retirement date.

After Hiring a Retiree in a Critical Shortage Position

- Retirees filling critical shortage positions must complete a Certification of Eligibility for Critical Shortage Teachers and Administrators ([VRS-160](#)), a Certification of Eligibility for Critical Shortage Specialized Student Support Positions ([VRS-160S](#)) or a Certification of Eligibility for Critical Shortage Bus Drivers ([VRS-160D](#)).
- The school division must certify the form and mail or fax it to VRS each year, even if the retiree continues in the same critical shortage position the next year.
- Employers must enroll each critical shortage retiree in myVRS Navigator each year and separate them at the end of their contract/end of the school year. Enrollments cannot be entered by batch file.
- To ensure that the retiree's monthly retirement benefit continues while serving in the critical shortage position, employers must enroll the retiree with the VRS Job Name "Critical Shortage Teacher," "Critical Shortage Specialized Student Support" or "Critical Shortage Bus Driver" in myVRS Navigator. Use of any other Job Name, including "teacher" or "administrative support contractual," will stop the retiree's monthly benefit and indicate the retiree has returned to work in a full-time, VRS-covered position.
- Although retirees in these positions do not earn service credit or make member contributions, the employer will submit employer contributions in the monthly contribution confirmation (snapshot) through employer-contribution-only plans, which are used for administrative purposes. Retirees must follow the return-to-work rules if they move from a critical shortage position to one that is not.
- For more information about the rules for working after retirement, see the [Service Retirement chapter of the VRS Employer Manual](#).

Questions?

Contact your Employer Representatives for school divisions:

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