

TEACHER CADET PROGRAM

Summary

The Teacher Cadet Program, administered by the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA), is a highly effective high school recruitment program aimed at attracting the “best and brightest” students to the teaching profession. Its mission is to “encourage academically able students who possess exemplary interpersonal and leadership skills to consider teaching as a career,” and it provides the opportunity for schools and districts to identify and recruit “homegrown” teachers and educators. Such an approach allows these talented students to return to their communities as education professionals.

Piloted in four South Carolina high schools in 1986-87, the Teacher Cadet Program has grown to include approximately 165 sites that serve an average of 2,500 juniors and seniors annually. Teacher Cadet is a rigorous college level, dual credit accrual course, and each school site is supported by one of 21 South Carolina teacher education institutions in the pre-collegiate network. For a student to be eligible to enroll in the Teacher Cadet course, they must have a “B” average in college preparatory courses, submit three written teacher recommendations, and write an essay on why they want to participate in the class.

The Teacher Cadet Program’s curriculum, *Experiencing Education, 10th Edition*, is comprised of 44 rigorous standards that are correlated with those of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), Association of Teacher Educators (ATE), National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), and Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC). In February 2010, these standards were adopted as the “national” standards for the Future Educators Association (FEA), an international student organization dedicated to supporting young people interested in education-related careers. Teacher Cadet instructors are trained in the use of this curriculum and participate in a three-day initial training session followed by annual professional development and ongoing training sessions in subsequent years.

Demographics

- *Target Settings:* Any South Carolina high school, charter school, and career and technology center (urban, rural, and inner city schools)
- *Target Groups Served:* High school juniors and seniors who meet eligibility requirements and are interested in pursuing teaching and/or the education profession and other careers related to children
- *Districts Served:* Information about the Teacher Cadet Program is shared with all high school principals in the state, and all are granted the opportunity to provide this course offering to their students.

Research and Evaluation

What national or other research was considered during the development of this program/initiative? Describe the evidence that shows the program/initiative works.

- **National Research Correlation:** The Teacher Cadet Program was founded out of a concern for the condition of South Carolina’s teacher supply pool and a need for a centralized, “homegrown” teacher recruitment effort to increase the number of students in the education pipeline. The Program began in South Carolina and has expanded its network to include 33 other states that use the Teacher Cadet curriculum. In addition to this all-inclusive curriculum, states have access to a virtual interactive technology hub, the first of its kind in the nation. (To see a list of active, national programs or visit the technology hub, please visit www.teachercadets.com).

The Teacher Cadet curriculum is divided into four themes: Experiencing the Learner, Experiencing the Profession, Experiencing the Classroom, and Experiencing Education. As Cadets experience the first two curricular components, they learn to become better acquainted with themselves and the community, develop a greater understanding of public education in our state and nation, and appreciate learning and cultural diversity in classrooms. While “Experiencing the Classroom,” Cadets take part in a clinical field experience for up to nine weeks allowing them to work with a cooperating teacher four out of five days per week. Research from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) concluded that best practices in teacher preparation are based on clinical experience supported by academic instruction and coursework that results in improved student learning (NCATE, 2010).

The final theme, “Experiencing Education,” helps students to think systematically about the teaching profession and identify their personal philosophy of education. During this component, Cadets also are exposed to critical need subject areas through an innovative curricula called SAY (Science and Youth), MAY (Math and Youth), and FLAY (Foreign Language and Youth). Cadets not only strengthen their own skills in these areas, but they often become interested in teaching these subjects. School districts can benefit from this result since so many of their vacant teacher positions each year are in these particular subject areas. Regardless of what subject they intend to teach or even if they plan to pursue a career in the teaching profession, Cadets, at the very least, become lifelong advocates for the education of all children.

- **Data Collection:** CERRA conducts an annual evaluation of the Teacher Cadet Program. A pre-post survey design is used to compare student perceptions before and after the class about education and education-related careers. Specifically, survey results identify students’ career choices and indicate whether or not the course helped change their minds favorably toward entering the teaching profession.

- **Measurable Results (2011-2012):**

- During the 2011-2012 school year, 72% of all public high schools in South Carolina had Teacher Cadet Programs.

- Students served: 2,427 (554 males and 863 non-white students)

- After completing the course, 41.3% of Teacher Cadets chose teaching as the career they plan to pursue after college.

- After completing the course, more than one out of every four (26.1%) Teacher Cadets who now plan to teach indicated they had been undecided or planned to pursue a different career before taking the course.

- 96.3% of Cadets said that the course was either very effective or somewhat effective in helping them formulate a positive perception of the teaching profession.

- 43% of Teacher Cadet sites were located in Geographic Critical Need Schools that meet one or more of the following three criteria: 1) absolute rating of below average or at-risk; 2) teacher turnover rate of 20% or more for the past 3 years; and/or 3) poverty index of 70% or more.

- 21% percent of Teacher Cadets applied for admission into the Teaching Fellows Program in 2011-2012, which is another indicator that the Cadets planned to enter the education profession.

- More than 53,000 students have participated in the Teacher Cadet Program in its 26-year history.

- Data provided by the South Carolina Department of Education shows that one out of every five (20%) of these Cadets has gone on to earn teacher certification and 4,043 former Cadets were employed in a South Carolina public school district during the 2008-2009 school year.¹

Program Resources

- *Annual Cost:* ~\$95 per student (curriculum; training; site grant funds for materials, supplies, and classroom support; and percentage of salary and fringes of a FTE to teach the course) Note: Costs for program implementation are waived for all South Carolina public schools

- *Funding Sources:* Education Improvement Act (EIA) funds; Site grants from school districts

- *Staffing Needs:* Certified public school teacher who meets the requirements for an adjunct professor based upon college/university accreditation policies

- *Infrastructure/Equipment Needs:* Basic classroom equipment

- *Partner Organizations:* CERRA, FEA, and the following 21 teacher education institutions:
<http://www.teachercadets.com/collegepartner/contacts.aspx>

Contact Information

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