

## 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 state's "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, especially in hard-to-staff or rural areas. 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, AP-weighted course, and each school site is supported by one of 22 South Carolina teacher education institutions.

### **Demographics**

- *Target Settings:* Urban, rural, suburban
- *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:* All South Carolina districts

### **Research and Evaluation**

*What national or other research was considered during the development of this program/initiative? Describe the evidence that shows the program or initiative is relevant and effective.*

Following the passage of the state's landmark Education Improvement Act (EIA) in 1984, South Carolina legislators became increasingly concerned about the condition of the state's teacher supply pool and the shortage of exemplary teachers in public education. The need for a centralized, "homegrown" teacher recruitment effort was recognized, and thus, the Teacher Cadet Program was founded to establish a pipeline of well-qualified potential educators in our state. Since that time, South Carolina's program has become the national model for pre-collegiate teacher preparation programs and now includes a 38-state network that implements South Carolina's model. (To see a list of active, national programs or visit the technology hub, visit <http://teachercadets.com/schools.aspx>).

The current trend of looming teacher shortages and its dire future outlook substantiates the continued relevance of the program since its inception. With an average of 5,200 public school teachers leaving South Carolina's classrooms annually and only about 2,200 students graduating from South Carolina teacher education programs each year, the need to recruit, prepare, and retain effective teachers in our state is as critical as ever (Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, & Advancement, 2014). "To combat this shortage, as well as to address the issue of bringing greater diversity and quality into the teaching profession, a variety of teacher recruitment [and retention] strategies need to be employed at various points in the education pipeline" (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006). In South Carolina, an integral facet of that pipeline is the Teacher Cadet Program.

Because South Carolina's male and minority teaching populations once mirrored the abysmal national statistics, the Teacher Cadet Program specifically targets males and minorities. According to U.S. Census data, "the racial and ethnic makeup of the nation's students has become less monolithic over the years;" however, the makeup of the teaching profession has failed to reflect that shift (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2013). Analyses conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (2012) revealed "students of color made up more than 45% of the PK-12 population, whereas teachers of color made up only 17.5% of the educator workforce." A total of 2,545 students completed the Teacher Cadet Program during the 2013-14 school year. Twenty-two percent of these students are males and over one-third are non-white students. These figures are significantly higher than the percentage of male and minority teachers that make up the total teacher population in the state, which is about 18% and 17%, respectively. As similar statistics related to gender and race are consistently produced, the Teacher Cadet Program will continue to advance its efforts to address South Carolina's documented difficulty in recruiting males and minorities into the teaching profession.

In January 2015, the Teacher Cadet Program was selected to be featured as a Grow Your Own (GYO) Model by The Teacher Quality Department of the National Education Association (NEA). The Program's identification and feature resulted in a national publication and resource for the organization that features exemplars in Grow Your Own programs and is shared with local and state affiliates across the country that are interested in establishing similar programs. The Teacher Cadet Program has also been featured as an exemplary teacher recruitment and retention model in three national publications. In 2012, it was included in a case study conducted by the Personnel Improvement Center that focuses on three state approaches in growing your own programs to recruit and retain qualified special education personnel. The Hoenny Center published a book during the same year that identified the Program as a model example of peer teaching. In 2010, the Program was referenced in a book written by Dr. Janet Kearney-Gissendaner that highlights tools and resources to help school leaders seamlessly incorporate minority teacher recruitment and retention programs into current human resources activities. The Teacher Cadet Program's curriculum, *Experiencing Education*, 10th Edition, is comprised of 44 rigorous standards that are correlated with those of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), 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 (F.E.A.), an international student organization dedicated to supporting young people interested in education-related careers. In addition to this all-inclusive curriculum, a virtual interactive technology hub, the first of its kind in the nation, complements the Program. As made evident by these scholarly recognitions, South Carolina's Teacher Cadet Program is highly effective in addressing a number of challenging areas of public education including teacher preparation, recruitment, retention, and advocacy for the profession.

CERRA conducts an annual evaluation of the Teacher Cadet Program. A pre-post, quasi-experimental 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 (2013-2014):*

- During the 2013-2014 school year, 72% of all public high schools in South Carolina had Teacher Cadet Programs.
- Students served: 2,545 (555 or 22% males; 871 or 34.2% non-white students)
- After completing the course, 41% of Teacher Cadets chose teaching as the career they plan to pursue after college. Prior to the course, nearly one-quarter of the 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 effective in helping them formulate a positive perception of the teaching profession.
- 44.2% 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.
- 71% percent of the 779 students who applied for admission into the Teaching Fellows Program in 2013 were Teacher Cadets, which is another indicator that the Cadets planned to enter the education profession.
- More than 57,000 students have participated in the Teacher Cadet Program in its 28-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

#### **Resources**

- *Annual Cost:* ~\$113 per student; Costs for program implementation are waived for all South Carolina public schools
- *Funding Sources:* SC General Assembly via Education Improvement Act (EIA) funds
- *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, Future Educators Association Palmetto State Teachers Association, The South Carolina Education Association, and the following 22 teacher education institutions across SC: <http://www.teachercadets.com/collegeteacherpartner/contacts.aspx>

#### **Contact Information**

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Links to Books, Reports, Studies, and News Articles about the Teacher Cadet Program (Sampling):  
<http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Staffingstudents/Wanted-Good-teachers->  
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar93/vol150/num06/Teaching-“Cadet-Teachers”.aspx>

Links to Videos about the Teacher Cadet Program:  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nK9G\\_0UrI4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nK9G_0UrI4)  
<http://palmettoscene.org/video/video-teacher-cadet-program-making-impact-across-nation>

*Teacher Cadet Programs in South Carolina*

