

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 21 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 5,300 public school teachers leaving South Carolina's classrooms annually and just over 2,000 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, 2017). "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 2,652 students completed the Teacher Cadet Program during the 2015-16 school year. Twenty-two percent of these students are males and thirty-two percent 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 19% and 17.5%, 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.

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 (2015-2016):

- During the 2015-2016 school year, 70.2% of all public high schools in South Carolina had Teacher Cadet Programs.
- Students served: 2,652 (585 or 22.1% males; 858 or 32.4% non-white students)
- After completing the course, 39.4% 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.
- 96.8% of Cadets said that the course was effective in helping them formulate a positive perception of the teaching profession.
- 74.2% percent of the 866 students who applied for admission into the Teaching Fellows Program in 2015-16 were Teacher Cadets, which is another indicator that the Cadets planned to enter the education profession.
- More than 62,650 students have participated in the Teacher Cadet Program in its 30-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:* ~\$154 per student (Note: 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, Palmetto State Teachers Association, The South Carolina Education Association, and the following 21 teacher education institutions across SC: <https://www.teachercadets.com/college-partners.html>

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/vol50/num06/Teaching-“Cadet-Teachers”.aspx>

Links to Videos about the Teacher Cadet Program:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nK9G_0UrI4

<http://www.sctev.org/blog/palmetto-scene/2013/teacher-cadet-program-making-impact-across-nation>

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Teacher Cadet Programs in South Carolina

