



South Carolina Teacher Leadership

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We are delighted to bring you the third issue of the 2019-20 South Carolina Teacher Leadership newsletter. Our goal is to provide a collaborative resource that highlights state and district level teacher leadership activities, outlines issues related to South Carolina education, and sparks ideas among Teacher Forums.

"The art of life lies in a constant readjustment to our surrounding."

-- Kakuzo Okakura

Several weeks ago the unexpected happened, and schools across the state closed and transitioned to distance learning. Teachers, administrators, and support staff worked tirelessly to put systems into place to continue to meet students' needs during this difficult time. Digital learning environments, learning packets, virtual office hours, and food services are among the many ways educators kept some sense of normalcy in the students' lives. If there is a silver lining to be found, perhaps it is the ability to maintain and even recreate the community that school provides and redefine these important relationships.

Many have stepped up to support each other in this difficult time. Businesses began offering their services and products for students' use. Authors granted permission to share their work without worry about copyright laws. Our own State Teacher of the Year, Chanda Jefferson, offered her expertise to the State Department of Education and collaborated with them on a number of pandemic-related issues. Educators from across the state began pooling resources and offering their expertise. As important as teaching and learning is, it also became clear that managing stress and taking care of our own needs was going to be a priority. Again, educators stepped up to the plate using Facebook as a platform to connect people needing a little support.

Self-Care for South Carolina Educators is a Facebook Group dedicated to supporting our state's educators as we navigate school closures due to COVID-19. The group provides numerous resources such as virtual meetups, daily tips, articles, live yoga sessions, and mindfulness practices. To join the group, go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/208177127125278/>. If you have any questions, contact Todd Scholl at todd@cerra.org.

South Carolina Honor Roll Teachers

State Superintendent Molly Spearman surprised five teachers to announce that they had been named Honor Roll teachers. Each of the five teachers will now compete for the position of 2021 South Carolina Teacher. Regardless of who moves into that role, all five

teachers will serve in leadership capacities next year as the South Carolina Teacher Forum welcomes the next cohort of District Teachers of the Year. Meet the five finalists.



Shawn Norris is a physical education teacher at Satchel Ford Elementary School in Richland County School District One. He serves students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Shawn is a National Board Certified Teacher who created two district wide programs to increase cardiovascular fitness among the schools' population: The Footprint Challenge and the District Fitness Bowl. Shawn believes that teachers are vessels for helping students discover their unique talents and abilities.



Sarah Gams teaches English at Spring Hill High School in Lexington-Richland School District Five. She is a National Board Certified teacher with sixteen years of experience. She has led nine student educational tours abroad. Sarah inspires the love of reading through the Community Book Club she started at her school. She believes "Yes" is the most impactful word in teaching. She values parental involvement, global citizenry, and a passion for reading.



Tanya Peckham is a first grade teacher at Wilder Elementary School in Sumter School District. She has been teaching for nineteen years. Tanya has had the opportunity to teach and earn the title of school Teacher of the Year in both North Carolina and Georgia before moving to South Carolina. She uses various teaching strategies to meet the needs of her diverse student population and encourages her students and colleagues to be risk-takers and to accept mistakes as opportunities to learn.



Ashley Bennett is a seventh grade mathematics teacher at Woodruff Middle School in Spartanburg County School District Four. Ashley is a National Board Certified Teacher who believes that in order to teach a child, you have to first know a child. She has been a recipient of the Betty Dewitt Outstanding Educator Award and the CHS Foundation Scholarship which allowed her to attend the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference. Ashley is a strong believer in teaching the whole child and focusing on more than curriculum and content in order to impact the next generation.

Richard (Rick) Whitmore is a Spanish teacher at York Comprehensive High School with fifteen years of experience. He developed the curriculum for the AP Spanish Language and Culture course at both his former and current high school. He believes that having a strong rapport with students



is crucial to the learning process. In his curriculum, he replaces the term language *learning* with language *acquisition*. Rick also places an emphasis on soft skills that are needed for students to be able to communicate effectively.

Teacher Forums During Covid-19

The pandemic has changed the way we do just about everything right now. Just as it didn't mean that teaching and learning stopped, the work and learning that takes place in forums can continue. Aiken County School District's Teacher Forum just demonstrated that. They held a virtual meeting of the forum. Reach out to [Suzanne Koty](#) if you need support.



We would like to be able to connect all of the forums throughout the state so that you can learn from each other. Please take a minute to provide a link for your forum's facebook, twitter, or website accounts if you have one.

Use [this link](#) to update the form.

Upcoming Trainings

SC Mentor Training

Mentor Training*

June 22-23 Anderson

June 29-30 Spartanburg

Mentor Trainer Certification Training*

July 7-8 Spartanburg

* You must meet the eligibility requirements for the training. Your district's Mentoring and Induction Coordinator can register you for the training.

We are closely monitoring the Covid-19 situation and will make decisions about these trainings at a later date following the guidelines and recommendations of the governor and other state officials. While we know how crucial these trainings are to our work, safety is a priority.

National Board Awareness Webinars

Teachers who are interested in learning about the National Board certification process can join a webinar. The session begins at 4:15. Use the link below to register.

[May 12, 2020](#)

National Board Renewal is being replaced by Maintenance of Certification (MOC) beginning in 2020-2021. NBCTs who are in their eighth or ninth year of the 10 year certification or 3rd or 4th year of the 5 year certification will be eligible to go through MOC. As more information becomes available about the MOC process, CERRA will host webinars to share information.

Due to Covid-19, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has made a number of adjustments to the deadlines and requirements for both initial certification and renewal/maintenance of certification. For more information, please visit the National Board's website or the National Board tab on our website.

Professional Development Opportunity

Leadership Enrichment and Development ([LEAD](#)) is designed to support school counselors, library media specialists, and other school support staff to grow their leadership skills. The program focuses specifically on vision, collaboration, and influence and their contributions to effective instructional leadership. Contact: Regina H. Thurmond, rthurmond@ed.sc.gov for more information.

Book Club

Teacher leaders across the state are participating in a virtual book study of Simon Sinek's *The Infinite Game*. They began discussing the mindset required to address education as an infinite game and the capacity to build that mindset in their organization's faculty and staff. If you missed the chance to participate in this group, stay tuned next year to be a part of the next book study.

"Courage, in the Infinite Game, is not solely about the actions we take. Even leaders who operate with a finite mindset can take risks. Courage, as it relates to leading with an infinite mindset, is the silliness to completely change our perception of how the world works."

--Simon Sinek

"If you're a leader, you not only have the power to strengthen your own connections, but to foster a work environment that values, instead of hinders, social investment."

--Shawn Achor

"The circumstances of our lives change week by week, year by year. But we're still us. And our habits of thinking tend to produce consistent results no matter what's going on in our work, our relationships, or the world around us. If our habits of thinking are beneficial, we tend to experience positive results, such as happiness, personal satisfaction, even material success."

--Michael Hyatt

Reading Corner

Simon Sinek's *The Infinite Game*

Questions for Thought: Sinek tells us that there are two pathways to shifting our mindset so that we see the world through an infinite mindset:

1. A life-altering experience that challenges the way we view the world
2. The identification of a Just Cause, community with those who share our cause, and a rival who pushes us towards self-improvement

Covid-19 may be life-altering for some. It may shape the way they think moving forward and lead them towards a revolution. For others, do you know your Just Cause?

Your Best Year Yet: A 5 - Step Plan for Achieving Your Most Important Goals by Michael Hyatt

As hard as it is to believe, this year is almost over. Typically certain events in the academic year mark the impending closure. This year is a little different. It is also different because you have stepped into the journey of teacher leadership. Hyatt offers a plan for reflecting on the year by conducting an After-Action Review.

Work through the four stages:

1. Identify what you wanted to happen
2. Acknowledge what happened
3. Learn from the experience
4. Adjust your behavior appropriately

The seven questions that will help you work through those four stages are as follows:

1. How do you think the past year went?
 2. What were your goals or dreams for the year?
 3. What regrets or disappointments are you experiencing?
 4. What acknowledgements did you expect but not get?
 5. What accomplishments are you most proud of from this year?
 6. What themes are recurring?
 7. What lessons have you learned this year?
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Shawn Achor's The Happiness Advantage

Are you feeling a little disconnected? It may time to reach out to someone.

"To make a difference to work performance and job satisfaction, social contact need not always be deep to be effective. Organizational psychologists have found that even brief encounters can form 'high-quality connections,' which fuel openness, energy, and authenticity among coworkers, and in turn lead to a whole host of measurable, tangible gains in performance."

**CERRA can provide support for your District Forum.
Contact Suzanne Koty at Suzanne@cerra.org for more information.
Options: Organizational support, presentations, strategic planning, etc.**

CERRA'S LEADERSHIP TEAM

<p>Jenna Hallman, PhD Program Director hallmanj@cerra.org</p>	<p>Suzanne Koty, PhD Program Facilitator suzanne@cerra.org</p>
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