



656 Teachers Become National Board Certified; South Carolina Retains Third Place Ranking in Nation

by Mychal Frost
Public Information Coordinator

Six hundred fifty-six South Carolina teachers have achieved National Board Certification® in 2007 according to recent announcement from the National Board for Professional Standards.

"Strong, effective teachers are critical to ensuring the academic success of our young people," said State Superintendent of Education Jim Rex. "The National Board process is a major part of our efforts to elevate the teaching profession here in South Carolina. Teachers who participate say that it strengthens what they do in the classroom and makes them better teachers. Ultimately, our students are the real winners."

This year's number of newly certified teachers increases the total number of nationally-certified teachers in the Palmetto State to 5,734, the third highest in the country behind North Carolina (12,770) and Florida (10,875). NBCTs represent 12.1 percent of the state's teaching force.

"The number of National Board Candidates and National Board Certified Teachers speaks volumes to the dedication South Carolina educators have for their students and the profession," said Brett Vaughn, National Board Program Director with CERRA.

There has been significant growth in the 14-year history of South Carolina's

involvement in the certification process; five teachers earned the designation in 1994 and the highest single-year total came in 2002 with 1,073 teachers achieving National Board Certification.

CERRA continues to provide an infrastructure of support for not only high levels of awareness for National Board initiative, but also for the retention of candidates once they identify themselves as accomplished teachers who desire support in achieving National Board Certification. This tri-level infrastructure includes a district liaison in each of the state's 85 school districts, the Board Certification Network of South Carolina Educators, and collaboration with other state agencies including the State Department of Education.

"We're proud of all South Carolina's teachers who participate in the National Board Certification process. We celebrate with those who received certification this year and offer continued support and encouragement to those teachers who are still in the process," said CERRA Executive Director Dr. Gayle Sawyer.

"NBC standards are incorporated in the teaching performance standards in many states and in the standards for teacher preparation programs around the country. We are fortunate that our legislature appreciates the impact of the NBC process as a high level of quality professional development and as a career path for our teachers," she said.

The National Board process defines the knowledge, skills and ac-

complishments that symbolize teaching excellence. It was created so teachers, like professionals in other fields, can achieve distinction by demonstrating through a demanding performance assessment that they meet high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do.

"Each year teachers embark on this incredible journey knowing they will grow professionally and we are committed to being supportive to teachers throughout the journey," said Vaughn. "We know the outcome; these teachers make a difference."

Teachers seeking National Board Certification undertake a two-part process that takes from one to three

years to complete. The process requires candidates to reflect on their classroom practices, their understanding of subject material and their preparation techniques. In addition to preparing a portfolio with videotapes of classroom teaching, lesson plans, student work samples and reflective essays, teachers must complete assessment center exercises based on content knowledge that proves they have mastered the subjects they teach and also know how to teach them.

Since 2000, CERRA has administered the South Carolina National Board Certification Loan Program for teachers choosing to pursue NBPTS certification.

Pee Dee Summit Generates Four Policy Recommendations

by Jo Ann Sherbine
TIR - Region 4

National Board Certified Teachers from five districts met at Hartsville Middle School on Saturday, September 29, for the first local policy summit in South Carolina.

The summit provided NBCTs, all from Pee Dee districts challenged by common concerns of funding, teacher retention, and technology resources, the opportunity to have conversations about those concerns. As a result of the summit, several recommendations were generated to be shared with policymakers in the individual districts. The recommendations came out of three networking sessions entitled Teaching for Tomorrow: The Need for Innovation; Utilization of NBCTs: How We Can Help; and Effective Instructional Leadership. In addition to a detailed list of suggestions in several categories, four broad recommendations were outlined at the conclusion of the summit:

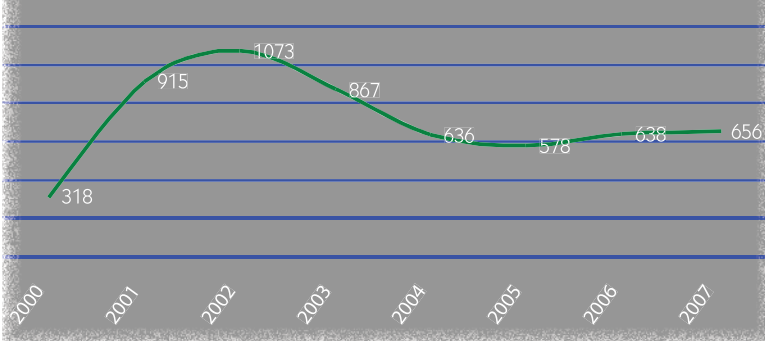
- Growing and Keeping Our Own: Build awareness of the TakeOne! process and its benefits. TakeOne! can be included in a school's renewal plan

and in teachers' Goal Based Evaluation (GBE).

- Professional Development: Allow NBCTs release time to meet together, mentor, and provide support for candidates actively pursuing certification.
- Effective Instructional Leadership: Build awareness among administrators of the National Board Certification process. Administrators should know and be able to access resources to provide support for National Board candidates in their school. Recognition for candidates should be provided when portfolios are submitted.
- Designate at least one trained candidate support provider with release time to meet with candidates to assess and provide support in the following areas: technical support for video taping, time management, and review of portfolio entries.

Participating in the event, in addition to the NBCTs, were the Board Certified Network of South Carolina Educators; CERRA; the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Palmetto State Teachers Association, The South Carolina Education Association, and State Farm.

NBCTs in South Carolina Since 2000
(by year)





Director's Chair



by *Gayle Sawyer*
Executive Director

CERRA commences strategic plan process; seeks input and feedback from members of its network

In a constantly changing world, what should CERRA-SC look like in the next five years? In the next 10 years? Given the mission and resources of CERRA, what are the most relevant services we provide and what new services will be needed? To whom should these services be provided? These are some of the essential questions asked by our Board of Directors and the staff of the Center as we undertake strategic planning this year.

The future of education and, thus, that of CERRA, is influenced by many forces including the growth of globalization and digital communication. Research on the economy, employ-

ment, and outsourcing of goods and services indicates that the worldwide economy is moving from an information age to a conceptual age.¹ The need for left-brain directed thinking that is sequential, literal, functional, textual and analytic is being superseded, rapidly, by right-brained directed thinking that is simultaneous, metaphorical, aesthetic, contextual, and synthetic.

Globalization creates a "...world in which comfort with ideas and abstraction is the passport to a good job in which creativity and innovation are the key to a good life. . ."² Educators are preparing students for jobs that do not exist using technologies that haven't been invented to solve problems that we don't know yet.³ How do we instruct current and prospective teachers to teach students who will work in a global economy and live in global community? How do educators prepare students for an unforeseeable future? What will

the needs of teachers be? How can CERRA be supportive? What will the Center's role be?

As we look at the environmental factors that influence the Center, Board members and staff at CERRA will be contacting our stakeholders asking for input into shaping the Center's role in the future. We will be collecting quantitative and qualitative data from members of the CERRA network.

I would like to invite you, as a member of our network, to email me during December and January at sawyer@winthrop.edu with your thoughts about CERRA's mission and future focus.

Resources:

¹Pink, D. (2005). A Whole New Mind.

²National Center on Education and the Economy. (2007). Tough Choices or Tough Times.

³www.break.com/index/shift_happens.html

CERRA Becomes Sole Provider of South Carolina Mentor Training

by *Jason Fulmer*
Program Director

The induction and retention of beginning teachers is one of the most important challenges facing education today, but we can allow the challenge to inspire us to make dramatic improvements in the way we support new teachers and provide for their ongoing learning. As education continues to adapt to meet the needs of an ever-changing population, one point remains constant: the need to retain quality teachers for every child in South Carolina.

Mentoring represents a very exciting opportunity to influence the entire next generation of teachers. Through the power of shared leadership, we have the opportunity to assist in the development of accomplished teachers who can provide a quality education for our young people. CERRA is

committed to building a strong, well-connected network of support for mentors and their beginning teachers across the state and providing ongoing support and professional development.

In October, the Division of Educator Quality and Leadership authorized CERRA to be responsible for conducting all three days of mentor training. This has been an exciting step in CERRA's work. Through regional mentor trainings this fall, we have certified approximately 340 mentors across the state. Fifty educators completed the trainer training and will begin co-training opportunities in the spring.

We are committed to building local capacity within districts and are excited about the momentum created to take mentoring to the next level in South Carolina.



Two mentor trainers rehearse possible scenarios each might encounter as mentors at a recent Train the Trainer workshop held December 4-5 in Columbia. CERRA has become the state's sole provider for the mentor training program.



Mission Statement

The purpose of the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement - South Carolina (CERRA) is to provide leadership in **identifying, attracting, placing and retaining** well-qualified individuals for the teaching profession in our state. In doing so, CERRA will respond to changing needs of teachers from under-represented populations, in critical subject fields and in underserved geographical areas in South Carolina. CERRA will work cooperatively with other organizations to promote the teaching profession.

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Region Four

Jo Ann Sherbine

Region Five

Rhonda Farmer

2008 South Carolina Teacher of the Year

Ann Marie Taylor



Program Spotlight:



'Reading Soul Mates' Helps Wando High School Teacher Cadet to Crack the Code

by Sarah Butler-Burdette
Teacher Cadet - Wando HS

"Ba-Ba-Ba." My reading soul mate is sounding out the word ball. To some that may seem like an easy word and one that you could recognize in seconds. But, for others, reading doesn't come as easy and can really put a damper on your elementary school experience.

So, what exactly is Reading Soul Mates? This is a program that my fellow Teacher Cadets from Wando High School and I participate in once a week for a total of nine weeks. This program is designed to help students that are struggling with reading. My Teacher Cadet class reads with first and second graders from a local elementary school, Laurel Hill Elementary.

We go to the school every Friday during the nine-week program. This is a highlight of our week and a highlight for our reading soul mates. We read books that are suggested for their reading level and play educational games. Even though most of the students hate reading, they love having one-on-one attention from high school students.

I have two buddies who are in first and second grade. Both are polar opposites in the personality category. My first buddy will talk your ear off and would rather talk to you about the weather than the book that's in front of him. My second buddy is shy. In fact, he hardly talks at

all. I tried joking with him and giving him lots of praise, but I just couldn't seem to get him to smile. That is until I had the idea of making him a card for his birthday. We happened to be having our reading lesson the day of his birthday so I made him a homemade card. When I handed it to him he got the biggest smile on his face. His smile was contagious and I had finally cracked the code. Yes! To me that was my biggest accomplishment to date. It showed me that even the simplest of things can mean the most to your students. Since that day our relationship has been much more relaxed and enjoyable. I had never imagined a simple birthday card would teach me as much as it did.

Don't get me wrong though, there are the days that you have to take deep breaths and keep your cool. For instance when my reading buddy decided he was sick of reading and wanted to run out of the library. Looking back on this day makes me laugh, but at the time I really had to remember the patience it takes to be a teacher and a good role model. Instead of yelling after him or lecturing him I used praise and exciting games to get him to come back inside. This experience taught me that some students misbehave and you have to keep them excited about learning so that they don't have time to cause disruption. From then on my reading soul mate and I alternated reading to each other. We also played games when we needed to take a break from reading. Needless to say we

About Teacher Cadets:

The program, rooted in South Carolina, is now modeled in 23 states including Hawaii. Beginning in August 2008, the program will expand to New Jersey raising the total to number of states implementing the Teacher Cadet program and curriculum to 24.

The primary goal of the Teacher Cadet Program is to encourage academically able students who possess exemplary interpersonal and leadership skills to consider teaching as a career. An important secondary goal of the program is to provide these talented future community leaders with insights about teachers and schools so that they will be civic advocates of education.

The Teacher Cadet Program is an innovative approach designed to attract talented young people to the teaching profession through a challenging introduction to teaching. The program seeks to provide high school students insight into the nature of teaching, the problems of schooling and the critical issues affecting the quality of education in America's schools.

Piloted in four high schools in South Carolina in 1985-86, the Teacher Cadet Program has grown to include more than 170 South Carolina high schools serving over 2,500 high school junior and seniors annually.



Sarah Butler-Burdette, a Teacher Cadet at Wando High School, works with one of her reading soul mates. Students in Betsy Wilson's Cadet class participate in a nine-week reading assistance program at a local elementary school. Photo courtesy of Betsy Wilson.

haven't had any issues since!

Sure, there are days that our soul mates feel like doing nothing, but putting their heads down. However, the majority of the days are successful. Our students grin from ear to ear when you praise them for their reading skills. They giggle

when they actually beat you at a phonics game, but the most important, rewarding part of Reading Soul Mates is when the student finishes a book from cover to cover without asking for help once. Their proud smile makes it all worth while and reminds us why we are Teacher Cadets.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This is the second installment in a six-part series showcasing CERRA's programs. This article was written by Sarah Butler-Burdette, a Teacher Cadet at Wando High School. In the next CenterPoint: Teacher Forums provide leadership, voice on the local level. To read last issues program spotlight, Teaching Fellows, visit www.cerra.org/pr/publications.html and view the October 2007.



From left, a Whitlock teacher sings as part of Ann Marie Taylor's rendition of "The Singing Bee," another teacher thanks CERRA staff for their visit, and principal Charles Redmond discusses the many positives of Whitlock Jr. High School. The Spartanburg school is one of 16 Palmetto Priority Schools across the state.

Whitlock Jr. High School Gets Morale Boost From CERRA Staff

by Mychal Frost
Public Information Coordinator

With the conclusion of a semester's end coinciding with the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, my visit to Whitlock Junior High School on Tuesday, December 11, to celebrate with students, teachers, and administrators was the cheer I needed to navigate this time of year.

Alongside 2008 South Carolina State Teacher of the Year Ann Marie Taylor and Region 1 Teacher in Residence Tracie Sweet, I walked the halls of the school, located in Spartanburg, and absorbed the many great things happening at the school. The reason for the visit, you may ask?

In April, Whitlock was identified as a Palmetto Priority School and the wheels were set in motion to assist the school, from the state-level, to improve student achievement and teacher retention. On the heels of the release of School Report Cards, CERRA began planning a visit to the school to meet with students and teachers with one goal in mind. We wanted to (and will continue to) celebrate the accomplishments of everyone at the school—from the lunch lady to the administration and all students and teachers.

Taylor, who is an energetic and dynamic speaker, was given the stage and had the undivided attention of more than 90 students during her presentations in which she encouraged each student to celebrate themselves. She went on to tell

them to thank their teachers, too.

Students were fascinated by the lively music and opportunity to be a contestant in Taylor's spin-off of the reality TV-show "The Singing Bee". They laughed together in one big chorus as fellow students sang the lyrics to a few hit songs. The laughter wasn't in mockery of the brave students who performed that morning. It was, however, in celebration of the courage each showed to stand in front of a group their peers. Taylor reiterated the idea through her reading of the children's book Stand Tall, Molly Lou Mellon.

One student said it best, "music makes the world go 'round." Another said, "I wish we could do this back in the classroom." The students were given the chance to shine, the chance to have fun while learning and they all took pleasure in the moment.

In candid conversations with Principal Charles Redmond throughout our visit, we were told the school is in a process of change and that, if given time, Whitlock will shine. As if standing in a pulpit, he went on to share with each of us, as we had with students and teachers during the day, that he believes teachers encourage students to become courageous. From then on, the rest of the improvement progression is simply complementary and success will be bountiful in the Spartanburg 7 school.

As we walked up and down the shiny, freshly-waxed hallways it was evident that Taylor's message had already begun to resonate through the student body. During class change, when the hallways were filled with commotion, you could hear the students talking about what they

heard in the morning presentation.

During classroom visits it was apparent that the work being done at the school isn't unsatisfactory, as one teacher put it. Another teacher who'd been at the school for more than 30 years simply stated, "the Lord sent me here and I've not left." Then, there was Carlos Gomez, a second-year science teacher, from Saginaw, Michigan, who found his job through CERRA while attending a recruitment fair at Central Michigan University. He is empowering his students every day.

Sweet, a National Board Certified Teacher from Anderson, is working with teachers and administration at Whitlock to conduct a National Board awareness meeting early next year. Teachers across the state that have completed the rigorous certification process can attest that their students benefit from them having completed the three-year process. Sweet hopes to rally a group of teachers at Whitlock to begin the process as a professional learning cohort so there is a ready-made support network in place during the strenuous process. Students at the school would greatly benefit and teachers could join the 59 other NBCTs that are teaching in Spartanburg 7 School District.

One thing's for sure, Whitlock is a special place with a staff carrying the right attitude and commitment to implementing a process of change. Likewise, the students desire the improvement, too. A banner hanging in the hallway just outside the commons area said it best: "Failure is NOT an option at Whitlock Junior High School."

CERRA staff members have also

participated in a similar "celebrate teachers day" at Johnson Middle School, another of the 16 Palmetto Priority Schools. As part of our involvement in the recruitment and retention efforts with PPS we plan to visit the other sites throughout the year and will become as involved as we are able to be.

Important Dates

Jan. 8-10
Mentor Training
Waterboro

Jan. 12
Teaching Fellows
Regional Interviews

Jan. 15
CERRA Advisory
Board Meeting

Feb. 13-15
Teacher Leaders Winter
Workshop

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On the road with the TIRs

journey around the state with Teachers in Residence

Region 1 - Upstate by Tracie Sweet

Teachers in the Upstate are making a difference in the lives of children every day! Through my travels, I've learned that educators in the Upstate all have one thing in common. They are all passionate about providing the best possible education for our children. This was evident at our Region 1 Teacher Forum meeting, where District Teachers of the Year met with our State Teacher of the Year Ann Marie Taylor to discuss ways that they could have an impact in their districts. Teachers left the meeting energized and motivated, knowing that their collective teacher voices can and will make a difference in the future of education in South Carolina. Many of those teachers are eagerly making plans to create local Teacher Forums in their districts. Many Upstate teachers are striving to join the over 5700 National Board Certified teachers in S.C. Districts all across the region are joining efforts to provide support workshops for their candidates. If you are a candidate and in need of support, please contact me at sweett@cerra.org. Teacher Cadets are anxiously awaiting the results of their Teaching Fellows application. Interviews will be held on January 12, 2008. Recently, students at Whitlock Jr. High heard an uplifting and motivational presentation by Ann Marie Taylor and teachers there were given tokens of appreciation from CERRA staff members.

Region 2 - Savannah River by Genie McDill

The ride through Region 2 continues to be fantastic: from the Teacher Cadets to the teachers and administration I visited in the past two months. One of our College Partners, USC Salkahatchie hosted its College Day November 2 and brought together five high schools from the across the region. Participating in the event were Cadets from Denmark-Olar, Bamberg-Ehrhardt, Barnwell, and Blackville-Hilda. USC Salkahatchie planned an excellent day that was greatly enjoyed by all who participated. Many thanks and deep appreciation goes to the college for providing such a quality experience

for our Cadets. Kudos to Steve McKinney and many of his Cadets at Strom Thurmond High School in their excellent performance of "Little Shop of Horrors" in front of a capacity crowd. McKinney directed the play and the majority of the lead roles were held by Cadets in his class. In November I was able to visit high schools in Aiken County, home to the largest Cadet class in the region (North Augusta with 34).

Region 3 - Midlands by Marcella Wine-Snyder

As we transition from good to great, it is evident phenomenal strides are being made in all recruitment, retention, and advancement efforts! Teacher Cadets are truly experiencing the profession as they gain valuable insights via school observations and begin their field experiences. Of the seven College Partner Institutions in Region 3, four have held College Days and Cadets have thoroughly enjoyed the workshops, the college class experience, and other activities. FEA chapters are still gearing up to attend the national conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee in February. Plans are currently underway to hold the first annual state conference next summer in Charleston. Teaching Fellows institutions are ecstatic about the reinvigoration of the teaching profession as they correlate the number of applicants reaching an all-time high. Districts continue to excel statewide in the number of teachers earning National Board Certification and district National Board Liaisons have stepped up candidate support to ensure that no candidate has to go through the process alone. In mentoring and induction efforts, our region truly shined as the regional training session held in Columbia was filled to capacity. Region 3 is truly the place to be, and we are spreading our wings just by being ordinary people doing EXTRAordinary things!

Region 4 - Pee Dee by Jo Ann Sherbine

Breathtaking is the word to describe fall in the Pee Dee. Not in recent history have the trees been so beautiful,

the leaf colors so vibrant. And not in recent history have we experienced the variety of CERRA-related activities as we have this fall. Teachers at Johnson Middle School in Florence School District 4 enjoyed brownies and apple dip during an "appreciation" visit and four of them expressed sincere interest in pursuing National Board Certification. Teacher Cadets at Kingstree sacrificed a day of their field experience to share stories with me. Georgetown and South Florence Teacher Cadets discovered how difficult it is to match personality traits with shapes; most agreed that they are combinations of many elements and that is an important component in relating to students in their field experience. Teacher Cadet College Days at Francis Marion, Coastal Carolina, and Coker were well-attended. National Board Awareness meetings were held in Clarendon 2 and Dillon 2 School Districts. Several mentors were trained at a local training session in Florence 4, and nearly 60 more from across the region were trained at the regional training. The Teacher Leader Forum hosted by Ann Marie Taylor was a huge success. Region 4 teachers are discovering, through many venues, the joy and value in networking, swapping ideas, and sharing resources. Being a part of the excitement and enthusiasm, sharing in the beauty of relationships - truly takes one's breath away.

Region 5 - Lowcountry by Rhonda Farmer

Life is good for the teachers and Teacher Cadets in the Lowcountry--From College Days to Scholarship deadlines to field experience to Teacher Forums to National Board Awareness meetings. You name it and it's going on in Region 5. Coosa Elementary (Beaufort County School District) and Hampton District Two are gearing up for the opening of the 2008 National Board Window, which is February 1. Charleston Southern, USC Allendale, USC Beaufort (South campus) and The Citadel hosted College Days for their area high school partners. The Cadets enjoyed creating the perfect teacher, listening to dynamic speakers and superb lunches. They also enjoyed

the opportunity to meet other Cadets in their region. The Lowcountry District Teachers of the Year participated in a Teacher Forum hosted by State Teacher of the Year Ann Marie Taylor. Teachers from Charleston, Hampton, Berkeley, and Dorchester counties enjoyed an informative meeting, especially a real low country lunch with all the trimmings. Thank you to all of the students, teachers, staff, and administrators of Region 5 for making my visits to your schools a pleasant one. I look forward to my second round of visits in the new year! Happy Holidays to everyone in the Lowcountry!

State Teacher of the Year by Ann Marie Taylor

Dr. Jim Rex's plan to improve the status of South Carolina's public education system includes a dynamic plan to increase innovation in every classroom to meet the differing needs of every student in our state. As South Carolina Teacher of the Year, I have been honored to have the ability to travel and meet amazing teachers, students and administrators across the Palmetto State. One of the most impressive schools I have visited was in Manning Primary in Clarendon School District 2. From the moment I walked into the school, I was greeted with open arms by both the staff and the administrators there. The environment was friendly and welcoming for visitors and guests and the classrooms were filled with energy and a desire to share, learn and grow as "a team." Everything I saw during my visit there was student-centered and focused on learning. This school was also extremely innovative. There were full-inclusion special education services, a gifted and talented program, and two single-gender classes as well. What a great example of what schools truly can be with leadership that believes in change and innovation! Hats off to the schools around our state that believe in innovation and celebrate learning - no matter what it takes!

Remember to follow Ann Marie's journey on her blog at www.2008sctoy.com.