

CarolinaCrED CORE Transforms Professional Learning for South Carolina Educators

The CarolinaCrED CORE team is comprised of professionals dedicated to connecting leaders and learners throughout the state with learning opportunities within the University of South Carolina. From providing support through the application process to securing faculty members to facilitate individual courses, CORE team members are committed to providing the most effective personalized, professional learning solutions to meet professional learning needs. Through CORE, individuals in South Carolina schools, districts, state agencies and internal academic units have access to flat-rate contract courses, customized degree programs and packages that lead to add-on certifications and endorsements.

With more than 20 years of experience managing the CORE program (formerly called the Office of Educational Outreach), Assistant Director Marie Cook works closely with districts and entities interested in providing coursework for their employees. Collaborating with educators to create the strongest learning opportunities for their individual needs affords the CORE team the opportunity to keep abreast of the latest issues relevant to education. Cook's team uses that knowledge to help develop programs to tackle the challenges educators and others are facing.

"I get to know many teachers, administrators, and state agency personnel well because we develop solid, trusting working relationships," Cook said.

New to the CORE team as of summer 2023 is Stacy Dixon, a dedicated educator with more than 13 years of experience in the field, who is working as the team's student services coordinator. Her responsibilities include guiding professionals through the USC application process, enrolling



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— Marie Cook
Assistant Director



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— Stacy Dixon
Student Services Coordinator

students in classes, and providing additional support as needed.

"I look forward to assisting the team in getting the word out that CORE is capable of providing so much to so many professionals," Dixon said. "We have many opportunities for professionals seeking growth to take advantage of through our program."

Marie and Stacy would love to assist you and your organization in providing flat-rate courses for your educators, creating customized degree programs, or assisting in selecting courses that lead to professional certifications and endorsements. 📚

Strong, missions-based alignment prompts unique partnership




Both Lexington County School District One and the University of South Carolina are dedicated to preparing educators as compassionate and creative advocates for students and the profession. After careful planning and consideration over several years, Lexington One and the USC

College of Education (COE) partnered to offer a Lexington District One Educational Leadership master's cohort with the support of CarolinaCrED CORE, an opportunity designed to grow educators in the district. The first cohort launched in 2021, with **22** educators successfully completing the program in the spring of 2023.

"At the district level, this partnership has allowed us to strengthen the internal pipeline of potential leaders available for leadership openings in the coming years," Lexington One Leadership and Continuous Improvement Director Dr. Natalie Osborne-Smith said.

According to Osborne-Smith, the EDLP master's cohort in Lexington One has benefited both the district and the aspiring leaders, with participants receiving a cost savings of more than \$5,000 thanks to the partnership. In addition, cohort members completed coursework designed to grow leaders in the Lexington One system specifically, which gave them leadership contexts and practices relevant to their district.

"These benefits would not have been possible without the strong partnership between the district, CarolinaCrED, and the EDLP department at the university," she said.

CarolinaCrED CORE and the faculty in the COE stand ready to customize degree programs for your schools or districts. 

1,470
teachers were
impacted by
CarolinaCrED CORE
from Spring 2022
- Spring 2023

What kind of courses can be completed through CarolinaCrED CORE? Here are some examples:

- **EDUC 632 – Homeless and High-Risk Students**
Offered by Richland County School District One for more than 20 years, this course assists educators in identifying homeless and high-risk students
- **EDRD 794/795 – ESOL – English Speakers of Other Languages**
Richland County School District Two offers its educators these courses, which can be taken as part of the online language and literature M.Ed. degree.
- **EDUC 610 - Case Study in Classroom Management**
This course, which has been offered by Williamsburg County School District and the CarolinaTIP program, is structured as a case study of the student's individual classroom practice and includes activities such as reflection on the efficacy of previous management plans and the review and analysis of practical management strategies.

Impact.

Participants reported that CarolinaCrED CORE courses had a positive impact on their professional practice.

- Learners deemed the courses to be very beneficial to them in the following areas: gaining knowledge on effective teaching, gaining knowledge in the field taught, reflecting on teaching, and following professional standards and responsibilities.
- K-12 educators reported that they felt confident after participating in CarolinaCrED. Specifically, they felt very confident in engaging students in classroom activities, setting learning goals for students, collaborating with colleagues, and reflecting on teaching; and reported moderate confidence regarding teaching virtually and integrating technology in teaching.

Quality.

Participants reported being satisfied with CarolinaCrED CORE courses.

- K-12 educators were very satisfied with areas related to instruction, and they expressed satisfaction with technology support.
- Many participating educators (90% of K-12 educators and 79% of instructors) indicated that they were likely (extremely likely + somewhat likely) to recommend CarolinaCrED CORE courses to others.

Why offer a contract course to your employees?

Flat-rate courses are offered for \$12,000 for up to 25 educators, resulting in a savings of \$1,236 per teacher or 72% over regular tuition.

CarolinaCrED CORE Team

Marie Cook, Assistant Director

Stacy Dixon, Student Services Coordinator

Sheryl Horton, Program Coordinator for Professional Partnerships

Stephanie Martin, CarolinaCrED Communications Manager

Cindy Van Buren, Assistant Dean for Professional Partnerships & Director, CarolinaCrED



A Great Idea!

Since 2013, SC's electric cooperatives have offered the state's K-12 STEAM teachers an accredited graduate-level course free of charge through its EnlightenSC energy education program.

The partnership has been so successful, a second graduate course is now being offered, once again with a variety of modalities and activities.



Educators in Charleston County School District gathered last fall to learn about the M.Ed. in Teaching - Multicultural Contexts in Education degree, offered by CarolinaCrED CORE and the College of Education. A cohort of 15 CCSD teachers will graduate with this advanced degree in August 2024.

Charleston County School District filling vacancies with CORE degree options



Charleston County School District (CCSD) has a dynamic partnership with USC's College of Education and CarolinaCrED, and over the last six years, an impressive menu

of degree options for CCSD employees has been created.

Current teachers have had opportunities to earn one of two degrees at no cost to them: an M.Ed. in Teaching - Multicultural Contexts in Education or a Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS).

"We learned early on that we were working with a group of professionals on the CORE team who were innovative, efficient and flexible," CCSD Director of Certified Recruiting and Staffing Susan Watson-Bell said.

District classified employees also have free access to degrees that will lead to teacher certification with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a master of arts in teaching degree (M.A.T.) in elementary education, allowing the district to fill more vacancies and demonstrating its belief in and support of its employees.

"Because meetings with the CORE team provide a safe space for all parties to engage in true collaboration while working toward a common goal, we have been able to launch programs that are designed specifically for our employees or that are modified from an existing plan to meet the particular needs of our employees and district," she said. 🌟

"Whether it's a third-year teacher who now has a master's degree with no student loan debt or a long-term teacher's assistant who is about to begin her first year as a fourth-grade teacher of record, our employees are directly benefiting academically, professionally and financially."

*—Susan Watson-Bell
CCSD Director of Certified
Recruiting and Staffing*

For more information on CarolinaCrED CORE, please contact **Cindy Van Buren** at vanburec@mailbox.sc.edu

CarolinaCrEDCORE.org