



**Carolina Collaborative
for Alternative Preparation**
Spurring Innovation Through Collaboration

CASE STUDY

WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

BUILDING A
SUSTAINABLE TEACHER
PIPELINE THROUGH
CAROLINACAP



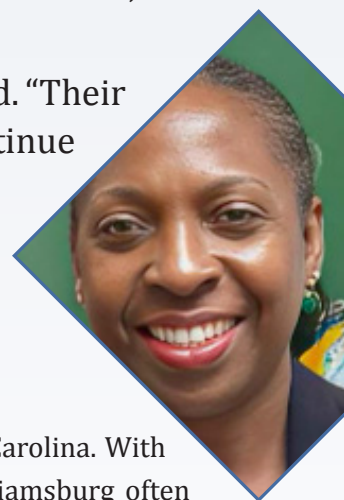


Planting a seed doesn't guarantee a garden, but with care, patience, and the right environment, growth is inevitable. Dr. Ernestine Young, a longtime educator and CarolinaCAP coach and Williamsburg County School District [Williamsburg] Deputy Superintendent of Federal Programs and Extended Learning, has seen this firsthand.

Over the years, she has coached four CarolinaCAP candidates, all of whom are now certified teachers in the district, including Teresa Woodberry, a former substitute teacher, now certified elementary school teacher.

"I witnessed the blossoming of these CarolinaCAP candidates," Dr. Young said. "Their growth and impact on students' lives is the rich soil our district must continue to till."

[READ MORE ABOUT DR. YOUNG'S CAROLINACAP EXPERIENCE](#) ►



THE CHALLENGE

Williamsburg serves 2,822 students across 11 schools in a deeply rural community of South Carolina. With only 227 classroom teachers on staff, every vacancy is felt acutely. Like many districts, Williamsburg often struggled to find enough certified teachers to fill classroom vacancies. At times, 10–15 positions were staffed by uncertified educators for extended periods, stretching principals and impacting consistency for students.

One of the aspiring teachers helping to change that is Ms. Rhonda Holmes, a CarolinaCAP candidate and graduate of Williamsburg schools. She knows what it means to come from the community she now serves.

"Williamsburg County may not have all the resources or technology that other schools have, but we can still produce excellent educators who know the community and want to give back," she says.

PARTNERSHIP WITH CAROLINACAP

Williamsburg joined CarolinaCAP as one of the original partner districts in 2020-21 with the goal of filling chronic teacher vacancies. CarolinaCAP provided a pathway for paraprofessionals, substitutes, and career changers to become fully certified while remaining in the classroom and receiving robust coaching. For a rural district facing chronic shortages, the model was an immediate fit.



“One key strategy for us has been establishing clear and actionable goals aligned with our long-term staffing needs. Partnerships with preparation [pathways] like CarolinaCAP have allowed us to move beyond planning and into implementation, with aligned support structures, mentorship, and targeted professional development.”

—**LaTonya Parker**, Recruitment and Staffing Specialist
Williamsburg Co. School District

HOW THE PATHWAY WORKS IN WILLIAMSBURG

CarolinaCAP grows teachers from the community itself. In Williamsburg as in other partner districts, candidates are often local residents who already know the schools and students through their roles as classified staff, parents, and sports coaches. Once selected, they step into classrooms as teachers of record, balancing their teaching responsibilities with coursework and micro-credentials aligned with their daily practice.

Some begin their journey through a CarolinaCAP residency, a preparatory year where they co-teach alongside an experienced “coaching teacher.” During this time, they gain hands-on experience, earn provisional licensure, and develop the skills and confidence needed to move into the full candidate pathway the following year. For many, it’s a year of learning, growing, and planting the seeds that will help them thrive as educators in their own community.

Support is built into the model at every level:

- **Individual coaching.** Each resident works with a district-based coach, like Ms. Alexis Brunson, Coordinator of Teacher Effectiveness. She emphasizes that the role is about support, not evaluation: “Our candidates receive so much support. They have their own individual coach and coursework support. That word, ‘supportive,’ really encapsulates CarolinaCAP.”
- **Coaching inside schools.** Residents are paired with experienced coaching teachers who model lessons, provide real-time feedback, and guide classroom management strategies.
- **Flexible learning opportunities.** To value teachers’ time, professional development sessions are scheduled during the school day, minimizing the burden of after-hours work.
- **Cross-departmental collaboration.** HR, leadership, and curriculum teams work together to ensure CarolinaCAP residents are integrated into broader staffing and instructional goals.

THE IMPACT

The most striking impact has been on the growth in fully-qualified and effective teachers in Williamsburg classrooms. Principal Debbie Donnelly recalls when uncertified teachers were the norm:

"We came from a place where we had 15–20 uncertified staff. Now, we're down to less than three. It feels good to get those teachers certified, especially because many of them are from our community and are now giving back."

CarolinaCAP has not only reduced vacancies but also shifted the culture of teaching in Williamsburg:

- **Retention:** Residents describe the pathway as transformative, equipping them with the tools to stay in the profession.
- **Preparedness:** Teachers report that the coursework and coaching directly strengthen their classroom practice.
- **Pipeline predictability:** With more local graduates and paraprofessionals entering the pathway, the district can plan for future needs with greater stability.

VOICES FROM THE CLASSROOMS

The voices of residents and coaches capture the change for Williamsburg classrooms and teachers best:

- **Ms. Holmes**, a Williamsburg alumna who now teaches 4K, calls her residency "transformative." *"It gave me all the resources I needed to become a phenomenal educator. Everything you need is there,"* she says.
- **Ms. Victoria McFadden Daniels**, a former Head Start teacher becoming a teacher through CarolinaCAP, credits her mentor and coach for her growth. *"CarolinaCAP is resilient. It provides collaboration, professional development, and support that make a real difference,"* says McFadden Daniels. She was named the district's First-Year Teacher of the Year in 2024, a recognition she describes as the moment she knew she was living her purpose.
- **Ms. Stephanie Brown**, now a second-grade ELA teacher, highlights how CarolinaCAP brought her colleagues together: *"A whole lot of us are members of CarolinaCAP, and it drew us together as a team. It helped us become stronger, together."*



RIPPLE EFFECTS

CarolinaCAP's ripple effects extend beyond these educators' individual classrooms. The district is now retaining more early-career teachers, lowering turnover costs and disruptions. Residents who grew up in Williamsburg are returning as certified teachers, strengthening the bond between schools and the community. Instructional quality is rising as teachers gain access to ongoing coaching and training, leading to greater student engagement and stability.

As Dr. Young reflects, candidates and residents are not the only beneficiaries: "CarolinaCAP keeps me grounded and connected to the classroom. It allows us to remain on the cutting edge, supporting our teachers and students while ensuring our staffing is stable for the future."

LOOKING FORWARD

For Williamsburg, the seeds planted through CarolinaCAP are already bearing fruit. With each teacher who takes root and each student who thrives, the district is cultivating not just a workforce, but a garden of educators who will inspire the next generation to bloom.

And for other rural districts weighing their options, Williamsburg's story offers proof that it's possible to build a strong, sustainable pipeline, even with limited resources. As Ms. Holmes puts it, *"Great things come from [Williamsburg County]."*

Want to cultivate the next generation of teachers in your district? Discover how CarolinaCAP can help you establish a sustainable pipeline of certified, community-rooted educators who are well-prepared to thrive in your schools. Connect with us today to start planting the seeds of lasting impact.

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