



Committee on Student Services
August 22, 2025
In-person and via Microsoft Teams
Commission on Higher Education
[Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 283 072 504 332 2 Passcode: n4FB7WP2

AGENDA

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Introductions and Approval of Minutes | Ms. Jenni Bryson, Chair |
| 2. Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) FY 2026-27 Appropriation Request and FY 2024-25 Annual Report for the EIA Funded Teacher Recruitment Project | Dr. Lishu Yin, Program Manager
Dr. Lindsey Yearta, CERRA Executive Director |
| 3. Other Business | Ms. Jenni Bryson, Chair |
| 4. Adjournment | |



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Minutes of the Committee on Student Services Meeting

August 6, 2025

12:00 p.m.

Committee Members Attending

Commissioner Jenni Bryson, Chair
Commissioner Gene Fant
Commissioner Paul Batson

Guests

Ms. Ashley Owens, Francis Marion University
Ms. Mary Katherine Bland, Francis Marion University
Ms. Katie Stevens, SC Tuition Grants Commission
Ms. Pat Greene, USC Beaufort
Mr. Joshua Haugh, The Citadel
Ms. Beth Bell, Clemson University

Staff Members Present

Dr. Karen Woodfaulk
Ms. Fran Brune
Ms. Kathryn Harris
Ms. Alfie Mincy
Ms. Alantis Seckal
Ms. Tanya Weigold
Dr. Lishu Yin
Dr. Jeff Perez
Mr. Mark Swart
Ms. Leslie Williams
Ms. Shardai Figgures

1. Introductions and Approval of Minutes

Ms. Fran Brune introduced the guests in attendance and confirmed that the meeting was held in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. Chair Jenni Bryson provided greetings and reiterated the purpose of the meeting to all in attendance.

Chair Jenni Bryson called to approve the June meeting minutes, Commissioner Batson motioned to approve the minutes, and Commissioner Fant seconded the motion.

2. SC Program for the Recruitment and Retention of Minority Teachers FY 2026 Budget Request (For Approval) and Quarter 3 Report (For Information)

Dr. Karen Woodfaulk introduced Ms. Reinell Thomas-Myers to present the FY2026-27 Budget Request and Quarter 3 Report. Ms. Thomas-Myers stated that SC-PRRMT is not requesting an increase for the 2026-27 budget, with the request totaling \$339,482.



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Ms. Thomas-Myers stated that, for Quarter 3, SC-PRRMT had enrolled 78 students with 3 graduates in the spring of 2025. 30 students applied, 10 students were eligible, 10 students were ineligible, and 10 students had incomplete applications for Spring 2025. Scholarships totaling \$128,658 were distributed for Spring 2025, bringing the annual total to \$305,312 in scholarship awards. A balance of \$14,170 was used in Summer One and Two, and \$120,656 was distributed in forgivable loans with the average loan amount totaling \$1,649. For Spring, tuition and fees were \$5,530, books were \$350, and insurance was \$436. Students are responsible for paying for insurance unless they are employed.

SC-PRRMT's spring initiatives included student recruitment at job fairs, community centers, business organizations like the Chamber of Commerce, and military bases. Outreach efforts have also included visits to interested participants by past and present program students, virtual recruitment fairs at schools statewide, and the development of a social media platform. SC-PRRMT is in the midst of creating a production video to highlight SC-PRRMT students to share with various school districts. Student-led Chat and Chew Sessions and partnerships with the Department of Education at SC State University are both integral parts of student recruitment, and SC-PRRMT hopes to increase the number of participating students for Fall 2025.

Commissioner Batson asked for clarification about the carryforward funds from FY2024-25 to FY2025-26 as there was an increase. Ms. Thomas-Myers explained that the additional funds were funds returned from students who did not fulfill the obligation to teach. Commissioner Batson also asked about the decrease in the number of students to take and pass the Praxis, as the number for Spring 25 was listed as "N/A". Ms. Thomas-Myers clarified that students are still awaiting scores from the spring testing session and that it is her hope many students will pass the Praxis with the help of SC-PRRMT.

Commissioner Batson moved to approve the budget, and Commissioner Fant seconded the motion. Dr. Karen Woodfaulk reminded the committee that the budget request is contingent on the approval of the General Assembly.

3. College Transition Program Scholarship Report (For Approval)

Dr. Woodfaulk introduced Ms. Kathryn Harris, the Scholarships and Grants Program Manager, to give the College Transition Program Scholarship Report. The College Transition Program is for individuals with an intellectual disability in the state of South Carolina that offers the opportunity to participate in a post-secondary environment where they can gain employment and independent living skills. The six federally approved non-degree programs are housed at Clemson University, Coastal Carolina University, the College of Charleston, USC Columbia, USC Aiken, and Winthrop University and range from one to four years in length.

For FY2024-25, two different allocations of funding equated up to \$700,000 in the CTP Grant, which is a need-based grant, and \$3.55 million in the CTP Scholarship program. To receive the grant, students must file the FAFSA

and have need as determined by Title IX methodology, and to receive the scholarship, students must be a South Carolina resident and enrolled in a South Carolina CTP. The award amount for the CTP scholarship is up to \$10,000 per year for eight terms of eligibility. For FY2024-25, 108 students received scholarships with 91% of students participating in a residential program. Completion rates statewide averaged at 94% in all six programs. While retention rates remained high, there was a decline in employment outcomes from 91% in 2023-24 to 51% in 2024-25. Scholarship disbursement from 2022 to 2025 was \$2.67 million for 308 total students, and there is currently a carryforward balance of \$8.13 million.

The carryforward balance funding is restricted by verbiage in Proviso 3.6; CHE requested to change the proviso language in 2025 to open access to the carryforward funds but was unsuccessful. Commissioner Batson asked for details regarding the 2025 request made by CHE. Ms. Harris stated that three requests were made, and CHE was successful in one of the three requests. The first request was that the scholarship be expanded for independent and public institutions, as the proviso specifies only public institutions are eligible. The second request was that the scholarship award amount be increased from \$10,000 to \$15,000 because of the individualized nature of the programs; this request was approved by the General Assembly. The third request was to allow flexibility for commission staff to be able to spend those funds for program expansion – either expanding the six current programs or helping to fund any institutions in South Carolina interested in starting a College Transition Program. Ms. Harris proceeded to explain that CHE currently is only able to fund scholarships through the carryforward balance, but those scholarships are limited because of the individualized nature of the programs. Funding is also provided to the consortium at USC but is limited to \$250,000 each year. Dr. Woodfaulk stated that the General Assembly is aware of the carryforward and that it has been the recommendation of CHE to expand the usage of funds. Commissioner Batson also asked if there was a specific reason USC Aiken and Coastal Carolina University are currently seeing the highest enrollment numbers in their programs. Ms. Harris stated that enrollment numbers vary by year, so there is no specific reason for higher enrollment at any institution.

Commissioner Fant moved to approve the report, and Commissioner Batson seconded the movement.

4. Proposed Palmetto Fellows Regulations (For Approval)

Ms. Harris presented the proposed regulations for the Palmetto Fellows scholarship program due to enhancements of the ACT. In February of 2025, ACT announced that, effective in April, they were removing science from online testing and offering it as an optional test subject for a composite score. In the current Palmetto Fellows regulation, science is required to be included for a qualifying composite score; however, most students take the ACT during school day testing, where they are tested at their high schools, which was not included in the enhancements made by ACT as it is considered paper testing. Science will not be removed from

paper testing until September. To determine how students' eligibility would be affected, data was pulled from ACT scores from the current year. It was determined that more students lost scholarship eligibility than gained scholarship eligibility by removing science. The regulation change proposal is that students can choose science to qualify for the Palmetto Fellows scholarship. For the legacy composite, students' English, reading, math, and science scores would be averaged with a rounding integer of 0.5. For the enhanced composite, students' English, math, and reading scores would be averaged with a rounding integer of 0.6. CHE has filed a notice for permanent regulations and will need to file for emergency regulations in September that are valid for 90 days and would need to be renewed prior to the start of the General Assembly session in January. Feedback from the public hearing in November and any feedback from commission members would be heard prior to submission to the General Assembly.

Chair Bryson asked why ACT would take science out of the required testing scores. Ms. Harris responded that, per a meeting with the ACT team, ACT has good data that the company relied on to make the determination to remove science test scores. However, they are still encouraging programs that are STEM-heavy or science-heavy to use the score for admission purposes. She also stated that it seems the intention is to align the ACT closer to the SAT. Commissioner Fant stated that North Greenville University is a test optional school but that many scholarship awards are dependent on test scores. He proceeded to state that the loss or diminishment of financial aid packages significantly increase drop out rates. As there were no other questions, Dr. Woodfaulk clarified that approval was being requested to advance the emergency regulations, as well as to move forward with permanent regulations that eventually will go before the General Assembly.

Commissioner Batson moved to approve the recommendation, and Commissioner Fant seconded the motion.

5. Palmetto Fellows Year-Round Application Timeline (For Information)

Ms. Harris presented the adjusted Palmetto Fellows Year-Round Application Timeline that would align with high school transcript processing times. Previously, the application timeline ran from July until mid-April for early applications and from June 1 to June 30 for late applications. The adjusted application timeline for the early application window will run from July until May 1. The adjusted application timeline for the late application window will run from June 1 until July 15 to offer students an opportunity to submit their application.

6. Education Improvement Act Centers of Excellence Grant Program FY 2025-26 Budget Request and Request for Proposals (For Approval)

Dr. Karen Woodfaulk introduced Dr. Lishu Yin, Program Manager of Educator Quality, Retention, and Recruitment, to present the Centers of Excellence Grant Program Budget Request for the 2025-26 fiscal year. Dr. Yin started the presentation with an overview of the 2024-25 fiscal year, during which seven Centers of Excellence were founded at eight institutions throughout South Carolina. The institutions cover three major topics: teacher retention and recruitment, leadership development, and the science of reading. The Centers of Excellence served 195 schools in

36 districts, and 77 teachers participated in different program offerings. Center directors provided 83 workshops and presented 6 papers at national conferences, 26 papers at regional and state conferences, and 1 paper at an international conference. Michelle McConnell, a participant of the Clemson Leaders Program, implemented strategies learned from the program at high schools in Greenwood and Ninety-Six, South Carolina to increase Algebra I scores. Ms. McConnell employed the theory of improvement and coached Algebra I teachers how to analyze, improve, implement, and assess instructions to improve instructional strategies, which would increase student learning and end of course scores. With these techniques in place, Algebra I scores increased from 33.8% in 2022 – 2023 to 70.3% in 2023 – 2024.

The Centers of Excellence proposed funding a new collaborative center in elementary math instruction. According to the 2023-24 school report card, 42.8% of elementary and middle school students met or exceeded grade-level expectations. With that data and in response to these outcomes, the State Board of Education approved the 2025 South Carolina College and Korea Ready Mathematics Standards in December 2023 with four implementations scheduled for the 2025-26 school years. This collaborative program will prepare pre-service teachers and equip them with evidence-based strategies in the classroom, closely resembling the science of reading model. The General Assembly approved an appropriation of \$1,137,625 for this program, \$350,000 of which is allocated to Francis Marion University. The Centers of Excellence proposed using \$90,000 from the carry-forward to offset the cost for the new collaborative center. Combined with an additional pending \$90,000, total available funding would be \$180,000. Dr. Woodfaulk clarified that this proposal is not to approve a center but to approve the budget. Commissioner Batson moved to approve the recommendation, and Commissioner Fant seconded the motion.

7. SC Institutions of Innovation and Information Final Report

Dr. Karen Woodfaulk brought the South Carolina Institutes for Innovation and Information Final Report before the committee for information.

8. Other Business

As there was no other business, Chair Bryson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 1:01 pm. The motion was moved by Commissioner Batson and seconded by Chair Bryson.

R. Wes Hayes, Jr.

Chairman

L. Jeffrey Perez, Ph.D.

President & Executive Director



August 22, 2025

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair Jenni Bryson, and Members, Committee on Student Services

From: Dr. Karen Woodfaulk, Director, Office of Student Affairs

FY2026-27 Appropriation Request and
FY2024-25 Annual Report for the EIA Funded Teacher Recruitment Project,
Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA)

Background

During the 1986 legislative session, the General Assembly authorized the SC Commission on Higher Education (CHE) to award grants to the public and/or private colleges and universities to improve the recruitment of teacher education candidates, allocating \$236,000 in Education Improvement Act (EIA) funds for this purpose. A consortium consisting of teacher training institutions in the State submitted one combined proposal to establish the SC Teacher Recruitment Center. The proposed Center was approved by CHE and has been funded annually since FY1986-87. Beginning in FY1990-91, appropriations for the SC Teacher Recruitment Center were made solely through EIA.

Beginning in FY1988-89, the General Assembly required CHE to “monitor the use” of these funds and to report on the “effectiveness of the programs” to certain legislative committees. The FY1990-91 Appropriations Act included a more comprehensive proviso, which instructed the CHE to “ensure that all funds are used to promote teacher recruitment on a statewide basis ... ensure the continued coordination of efforts among the ... teacher recruitment projects ... review the use of funds and ... have prior program and budget approval.”

Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA)

A Board of Directors provides governance over CERRA, including its budget and operations. The Board of Directors consists of representatives from colleges and universities, school districts, state education agencies, professional education associations, the General Assembly and private businesses and industry. CERRA reports annually to the CHE, through which the Center’s EIA-based appropriations flow. The CHE is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of CERRA and is authorized to review its budget. Budget review authority is also given to the Education Oversight Committee.

During FY2022-23, CERRA established a new strategic plan, containing an updated mission, vision, and goals. To successfully advance the education profession in South Carolina, CERRA plans to implement appropriate strategies to achieve its defined goals and ultimately create an environment where recruitment and retention needs of public-school districts are met. CERRA’s four specific goals are:



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1. Respond innovatively to existing/emerging teacher recruitment needs
2. Seek to diversity its funding streams
3. Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing plan
4. Work to eliminate existing barriers that prevent access to critical data

To execute its strategic plan, CERRA is using a variety of pre-collegiate and college programs to attract middle school, high school, and college students (Pro Team, Teacher Cadets, College Partners, Teaching Fellows, Minority Recruitment programs) as well as mid-life career changers, such as military retirees and downsized workers, to education careers. Along with its recruiting efforts, CERRA is focusing on retaining and advancing the careers of experienced teachers already in South Carolina's schools. In addition, CERRA provides program support for the State's teacher leaders through work with the district teachers of the year, mentor training for experienced teachers, as well as National Board candidates and National Board-Certified Teachers (see the FY2024-25 CERRA Program Report in Attachment 1).

Each September, after receiving CHE approval, the agency submits CERRA's annual reports to the Senate and House Education Committees and Education Oversight Committee, which are enclosed for reference. In addition to the annual reports, staff have provided historical and cumulative data (Attachment 1).

Budget

In FY2025-26, [Proviso 1A.6](#), (SDE-EIA: CHE/Teacher Recruitment) of the General Appropriations Act: directs that of the \$4,243,527 appropriated for teacher recruitment programs:

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education shall distribute a total of ninety-two percent (\$3,904,045)¹ to the Center For Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA-South Carolina) for a state teacher recruitment program, of which at least seventy-eight percent must be used for the Teaching Fellows Program specifically to provide scholarships for future teachers, and of which twenty-two percent must be used for other aspects of the state teacher recruitment program including the Teacher Cadet Program and \$166,302 which must be used for specific programs to recruit minority teachers: and shall distribute eight percent (\$339,482)¹ to South Carolina State University to be used for the operation of a minority teacher recruitment program and therefore shall not be used for the operation of their established general education programs.

¹Amount inserted for reference.

In FY2023-24, [CERRA received a \\$500,000 recurring budget increase for the Teaching Fellows program and operation expenses](#). According to the CERRA's communication, CERRA used the funds to offset indirect fees (including increase) paid to Winthrop University, offset fringe increases and employer contributions, and increase funding for Teaching Fellows Awards.

In 2023, the [CHE approved CERRA's one-time, non-recurring budget request for \\$200,000 specifically designated to build an Online Educator Employment System \(OEES\)](#) in FY2024-25. The General Assembly subsequently appropriated \$200,000 on a recurring basis in FY2024-25. However, the OEES was not developed during FY2024-25. According to the letter dated July 17, 2025 from Dr. Lindsey Yearta, the CERRA Executive Director, CERRA plans to begin the vendor selection process in October 2025 with the anticipated vendor selection in early 2026 (Attachment 2). Because the designated funds for FY2025 were not expended, CERRA will utilize the unused FY25 appropriation for the development and implementation of the OEES in FY26.

On August 8, 2025, CHE staff met with CERRA staff to review CERRA's budget and expenditures (Attachment 3). According to CERRA staff, the organization maintains a Teaching Fellows Collection account with an accumulated balance of approximately \$6.9 million. Carry-forward funds from the General Assembly's appropriations have been deposited into this account to ensure sufficient reserves to sustain the program should future appropriations become unavailable. CERRA's stated goal is to accumulate at least \$12 million to support the graduation of the final cohort of Teaching Fellows if General Assembly funding is discontinued.

During the meeting, CHE staff requested CERRA to update its budget and expenditure sheet (Attachment 3) and proposed conducting an audit of CERRA funds to ensure compliance with the Proviso. While Winthrop University serves as the fiscal agent for the CERRA program, it does not have administrative authority over CERRA's operations. CERRA pays indirect fees to Winthrop University for its fiscal services.

Following the meeting, on August 14, 2025, CERRA provided a brief version of its financial report (Attachment 4) that listed carry-forward funds and expenditures by broad categories rather than by the specific teacher recruitment programs for which appropriations were made under the Proviso. Rural Teacher Recruitment was the only program reported with available carry-forward funds. The report also reflected a reserve balance of \$6,977,904 as of June 30, 2025, comprising both carry-forward funds from the General Assembly's appropriation and collection funds from Teaching Fellows who either withdrew from the program or left the profession before completing their required service. CERRA agreed to conduct an audit (Attachment 6).

CERRA's responses to CHE staff's questions can be found in Attachment 5 and CERRA's letter to CHE in Attachment 6.

In FY2026-27, CERRA requests \$13,734,117, maintaining the same funding level as FY2025-26 (Attachment 4):

- \$2,231,680 for the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA), of the \$2,231,680, \$200,000 (recurring) is designated for the OEES, and \$500,000 (recurring) for the Teaching Fellows program and the operational costs.
- \$3,904,045 for the Teacher Recruitment program
- \$7,598,392 for Rural Teacher Recruitment program

Recommendation

CHE Staff commends to the Committee on Student Services:

1. Approval of the FY2026-27 budget request of \$13,724,117 for CERRA, the Teacher Recruitment Program, and the Rural Teacher Recruitment initiative.
2. As a best practice to help proper segregation of collections, carry forward funds, transparency, and compliance, approval of an audit of CERRA's fiscal operation to be completed and presented to the Commission by Spring 2026.

In addition, CHE staff recommends that CERRA develop a clear allocation formula for the recurring \$500,000 appropriated by the General Assembly in FY2023–24 and subsequent years for the Teaching Fellows program and related operational costs.

Enclosures:

- Attachment 1: FY2024-2025 Program Reports
Pre-Collegiate: ProTeam
Pre-Collegiate: Teacher Cadets
Collegiate: Teaching Fellows
Mentoring & Induction
Rural Recruitment Initiative
Additional Services
Teaching Fellows Program Data from 2000-2019 (April 2025)
Updated: Retaining SC Teachers through National Board Certification
Key Teacher Data
- Attachment 2: CERRA Letter re Online Educator Employment System
- Attachment 3: CERRA Budget and Expenditures_17July2025
- Attachment 4: CERRA Financial Report_14August2025
- Attachment 5: CERRA Responses to CHE's Staff Questions
- Attachment 6: CERRA's Letters to CSA_15July2025_12Aug2025

South Carolina's
Center for Educator Recruitment,
Retention, and Advancement



CERRA

Program Report
Fiscal Year 2025

Table of Contents

Pre-Collegiate: ProTeam.....	3
Pre-Collegiate: Teacher Cadets	4
Collegiate: Teaching Fellows	5
Mentoring and Induction	7
Rural Recruitment Initiative.....	8
Additional Services	10

Pre-Collegiate: ProTeam

CERRA's ProTeam program aims to interest middle school students in the education profession using positive learning experiences, role models, and a curriculum aligned with the Profile of a South Carolina Graduate. ProTeam has served more than 22,000 South Carolina students since its inception in the 1989-1990 academic year.

	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
Sites*	30	40	38	34	44
Students served	1,044	1,416	1,048	915	1613
Male students	491	624	461	366	659
Non-white students	526	674	424	378	653
Funds expended	\$105,300	\$118,516	\$128,584	\$114,102	\$111,477

*Some sites offer more than one ProTeam class. There were 95 classes in FY25.

Pre-Collegiate: Teacher Cadets

The Teacher Cadet Program consists of two courses – *Teacher Cadet Experiencing Education* and *Teacher Cadet Educational Psychology*. After completing *Experiencing Education*, students may choose to enroll in *Educational Psychology*, a follow-up course first offered in FY20.

College Partners in teacher education institutions collaborate with CERRA to offer enrichment experiences for Teacher Cadet students. Each of these institutions has articulation agreements in place for **dual credit** accrual upon successful completion of the Teacher Cadet course(s).

	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
Sites*	169	171	175	167	172
Students served – Experiencing Education	2,309	2,398	2,528	2,488	2,972
Students served – Educational Psychology	161	230	307	438	414
Male students	490	552	597	565	653
Non-white students	711	783	885	817	1001
College Partner institutions ³	22	24	25	25	23
Funds Expended	\$475,571	\$526,778	\$596,606	\$510,911	\$461,251

*Some sites offer more than one Teacher Cadet class. There were 246 classes in FY25, including 40 Educational Psychology classes.

Collegiate: Teaching Fellows

Currently, the Teaching Fellows program is available at eleven South Carolina institutions of higher education (please see the table on page 6 for a full listing).

Teaching Fellows can receive up to \$24,000. Specifically, the fellowship provides up to \$5,700 annually for tuition, board, and direct education expenses as well as up to \$5,700 annually for planned enrichment programs. Teaching Fellows participate in enrichment programs, have professional development opportunities, and are involved with South Carolina communities and business for the duration of their fellowship.

	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
Fellows who received funds	764	740	777	781	826
Fellows who graduated from the program	183	155	179	162	177
Fellows teaching to fulfill service requirement	570	600	587	605	630
Fellows who have fulfilled the service requirement and are employed in an SC public school/district	1015	1078	1126	1181	1249
Funds expended	\$4,562,654	\$4,517,653	\$4,626,838	\$4,530,770	\$4,559,932

*Fellows are allowed to receive funds for a period of up to four years.

South Carolina Institutions of Higher Education with Teaching Fellows Programs

SC Teaching Fellows Institution	Number of Teaching Fellows Enrolled in FY25
Anderson University	109
Charleston Southern University	42
Clemson University	101
Coastal Carolina University	59
College of Charleston	61
Francis Marion University	34
Lander University	80
USC – Aiken	36
USC- Columbia	140
USC – Upstate	39
Winthrop University	123
Total	824

Mentoring and Induction

The Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement believes that a strong system of mentoring is critical to support new educators and improve teacher retention rates in South Carolina. CERRA works closely with the South Carolina Department of Education and school districts across the state to host statewide and regional training sessions on a regular basis for those interested in becoming a mentor.

	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
Educators who completed the SC Mentor Training*	1,946	1,885	1,694	1,723	1,548
Educators who completed the SC Mentor Trainer Certification	40	35	40	39	28
Educators who completed the Administrator's Role in Induction & Mentoring Training	0**	64	86	78	57
Funds Expended	\$217,716	\$203,218	\$297,026	\$221,009	\$248,142

*The SC Mentor Training can be hosted by CERRA, an individual school district, or other educational entities. CERRA relies on districts and other entities to report their complete data.

**During FY21, the Administrator's Role in Induction & Mentoring Training was not offered through ILA, nor was CERRA asked to provide district-level training sessions

Rural Recruitment Initiative

Under the FY25 Proviso 1A.45, district eligibility was based on a five-year average teacher turnover rate of greater than 11%. Eligible districts also may not be one of the top 15 wealthiest districts in the state, based on the index of taxpaying ability.

The FY25 eligible districts included: Abbeville, Allendale, Anderson 2, Anderson 3, Anderson 4, Anderson 5, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, Chester, Clarendon, Colleton, Darlington, Dillon 3, Dillon 4, Dorchester 4, Edgefield, Fairfield, Florence 3, Greenwood 50, Greenwood 51, Greenwood 52, Hampton, Jasper, Kershaw, Lancaster, Laurens 55, Laurens 56, Lee, Lexington 2, Lexington 3, Lexington 4, Marion, Marlboro, McCormick, Newberry, Orangeburg, Saluda, Spartanburg 2, Spartanburg 3, Spartanburg 7, Sumter, Union, Williamsburg, York 1, and York 4.

	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
Legislative allocation	\$7,598,392	\$7,598,392	\$7,598,392	\$7,598,392	\$7,598,392
Public school districts eligible for rural funds	43	43	40	42	46
Public school districts requesting funds	43	42	40	41	46
Funds disbursed to public school districts	\$7,059,836	\$7,321,041	\$6,689,794	\$6,472,011	\$7,157,027*
Funds expended on behalf of public school districts	\$15,268	\$23,935	\$22,386	\$35,103	\$32,036
Undergraduate loan repayment funds disbursed to teachers	\$242,669	\$292,708	\$292,030	\$336,167	\$370,394
Administrative costs**	\$222,481	\$207,855	\$223,286	\$360,495	\$376,915
Carryover funds (into next fiscal year)***	\$676,840	\$429,757	\$800,654	\$1,195,270	\$857,291

*Includes \$236,905 FY24 funds disbursed in FY25.

**Includes a portion of 13 employee's salary, fringes, and travel, as well as indirect costs to Winthrop University.

***CERRA will retain \$350,000 for the Rural District Undergraduate Loan Forgiveness Program and return the remaining carryover funds to the SC Department of Education.

Additional Services

Online Educator Employment System: CERRA's Online Educator Employment System offers a centralized platform for job seekers to apply to South Carolina public school districts and for districts to post vacancies and access a statewide applicant database. In fiscal year 2025, CERRA maintained the current system while launching the state's Request for Proposal (RFP) process to identify a more efficient and flexible platform. PowerSchool, widely used across the state, has shown strong interest in supporting CERRA's mission, but all options will be considered before a final decision is made.

National Board Certification Support: CERRA provides an infrastructure of support for teachers pursuing National Board Certification® (NBC), a voluntary professional development opportunity for educators proven to have a positive impact on classroom retention. Turnover rates for SC National Board Certified Teachers (4.5%) remained significantly lower than those of all teachers in the state (8.8%) in 2023-24.

*NBC support services are funded through the SC Department of Education.

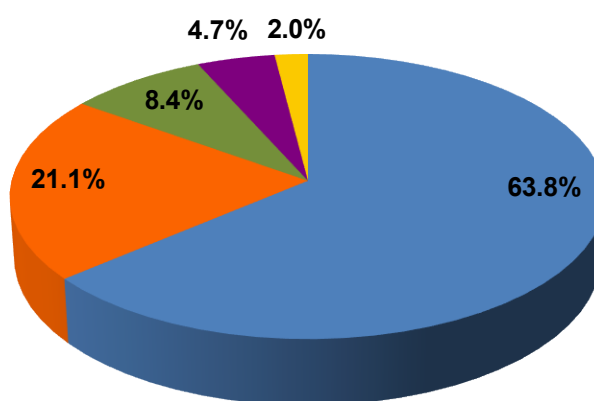
South Carolina Teacher Forum: The Forum is comprised of the current District Teachers of the Year (DTOYs) and chaired by the SC Teacher of the Year, who serves as a Teacher in-Residence. The Forum provides formal recognition to the DTOYs and works to develop their leadership skills and encourage them to be advocates for their profession.

*CERRA invoices SC districts for their DTOYs participation in the Forum.

Teaching Fellows Program Data from the 2000-2020 Cohorts (April 2025)

- 2,996 Fellows graduates / 3,767 awards = 79.5% graduation rate
- 63.8% of graduates (1,911 Fellows) are currently employed in 72 of 75 SC public school districts, as well as the SC Department of Juvenile Justice and SC Governor's School for Agriculture
- 93.3% of graduates (2,795 Fellows) have either satisfied their loan or are currently teaching for loan forgiveness in a SC public school
 - 62.8% of graduates (1,880 Fellows) have satisfied their loan through teaching service; of these loan-satisfied Fellows, 66.4% (1,249) are employed in a SC public school/district
 - 9.5% of graduates (285 Fellows) have satisfied their loan through repayment or a combination of repayment plus some teaching service
 - 21.0% of graduates (630 Fellows) are currently teaching for loan forgiveness in a SC public school

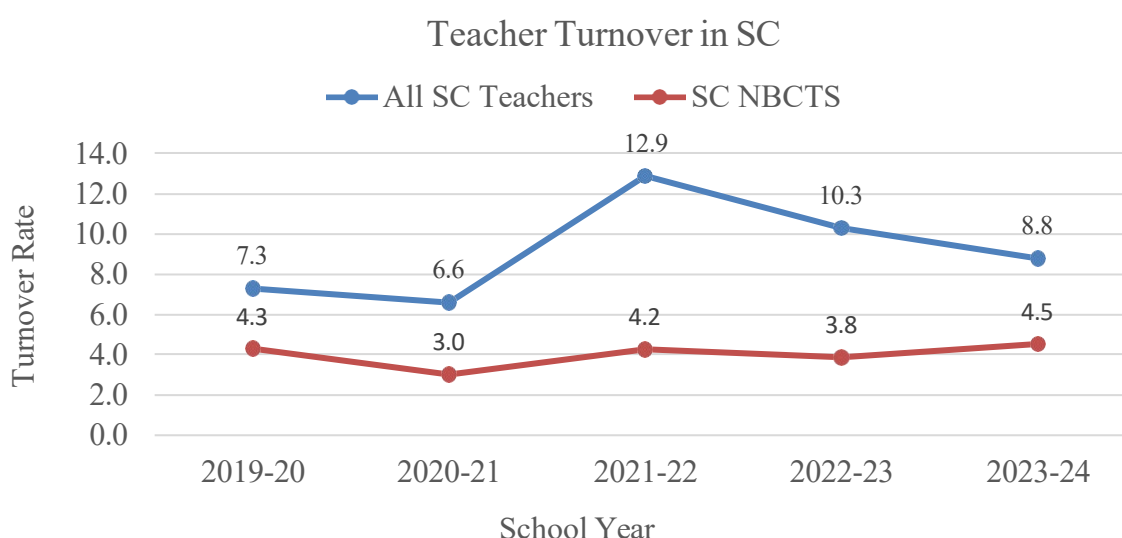
Teaching Fellows Graduates 2000-2020 Cohorts



- Employed in a SC district
- Loan satisfied through teaching; not employed in a SC district
- Loan satisfied through repayment/repayment plus teaching; not employed in a SC district
- In repayment
- In deferment (grace year, graduate school, military, or special request)

Updated: Retaining SC Teachers through National Board Certification

Since 2018, CERRA has released numerous reports indicating significantly lower turnover rates among National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) in SC compared to all teachers in the state. The table below, which has been updated with the most recent data available, displays turnover rates for these two groups of teachers. Specifically looking at the 2023-24 school year, turnover for all SC teachers was 8.8% and only 4.5% for NBCTs in the state. Although rates for both groups have fluctuated over time, attrition among NBCTs has consistently remained lower each year.



Statewide turnover rates were obtained from SC Report Cards, which are made available annually by the SC Department of Education. CERRA calculated NBCT turnover rates using the same formula applied to statewide rates. Turnover among all SC teachers includes those who leave the state for any reason or move into a non-teaching position within the state (i.e., assistant principal, district coordinator, etc.). Similarly, turnover rates among NBCTs include teachers who leave the state or move into a non-teaching position that is not eligible for the National Board state supplement.

National Board Certification (NBC) is a voluntary professional development opportunity proven to keep accomplished teachers in the classroom. Teachers who achieve NBC are known to possess leadership skills and, therefore, may seek non-teaching positions that allow them a greater impact on students and colleagues. However, many NBCTs report that the state supplement makes it financially possible to stay in the classroom. Without it, they are more likely to pursue higher-paying positions both within and outside of the education field. Additional information about NBC can be found by clicking [here](#).

Key Data from CERRA's South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Reports

School year	SC Graduates Eligible for Teacher Certification ¹	Teacher Departures	Early-career departures (≤5 years of experience)	Departures, transferred to another SC public school district	Departures, Retirements	Positions vacant after the start of each school year
2020-2021	2,226	5,995.7	2,551.0	1,345.6	1,104.7	698.9
2021-2022	2,123	6,927.1	2,389.6	1,568.6	1,278.4	1,062.8
2022-2023	2,081	8,320.9	3,014.9	2,187.0	1,443.7	1,473.6
2023-2024	1,957	7,498.6	2,781.5	2,193.3	1,124.6	1,612.6
2024-2025	Not yet available	6,532.8	2,331.5	1,732.5	1,250.8	1,042.9

Notes: Teacher departures refer to certified SC educators who left the position they held the previous school year. For example, data in the 2024-2025 row include educators from 2023-24 who did not return to a teaching/service position in the same district for the 2024-25 school year. Teaching positions are held by certified educators who provide instruction in a classroom setting, and service positions are held by certified educators who provide instruction and support in a school setting (school counselors, school librarians, school psychologists, and speech language pathologists). Departure and vacancy data are collected from SC school district representatives and presented in full-time equivalents (FTEs).

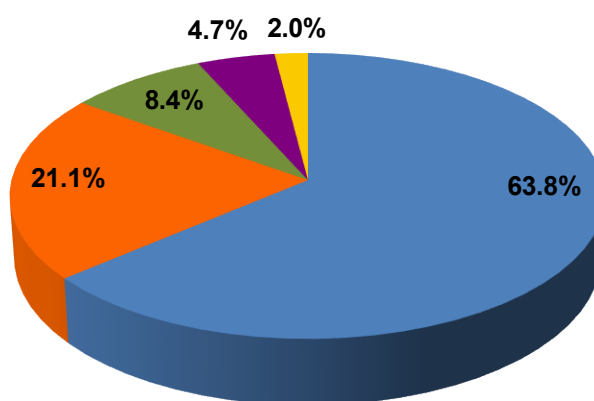
¹Data obtained from the SC Commission on Higher Education. Includes students who graduated from a SC public or private institution with a Bachelor's degree eligible for initial teacher certification and students who graduated from a SC public institution with a Master's degree eligible for initial teacher certification. Master's level data are not available for private institutions.

Full reports can be accessed at <https://www.cerra.org/o/cerra/page/supply-and-demand>.

Teaching Fellows Program Data from the 2000-2020 Cohorts (April 2025)

- 2,996 Fellows graduates / 3,767 awards = 79.5% graduation rate
- 63.8% of graduates (1,911 Fellows) are currently employed in 72 of 75 SC public school districts, as well as the SC Department of Juvenile Justice and SC Governor's School for Agriculture
- 93.3% of graduates (2,795 Fellows) have either satisfied their loan or are currently teaching for loan forgiveness in a SC public school
 - 62.8% of graduates (1,880 Fellows) have satisfied their loan through teaching service; of these loan-satisfied Fellows, 66.4% (1,249) are employed in a SC public school/district
 - 9.5% of graduates (285 Fellows) have satisfied their loan through repayment or a combination of repayment plus some teaching service
 - 21.0% of graduates (630 Fellows) are currently teaching for loan forgiveness in a SC public school

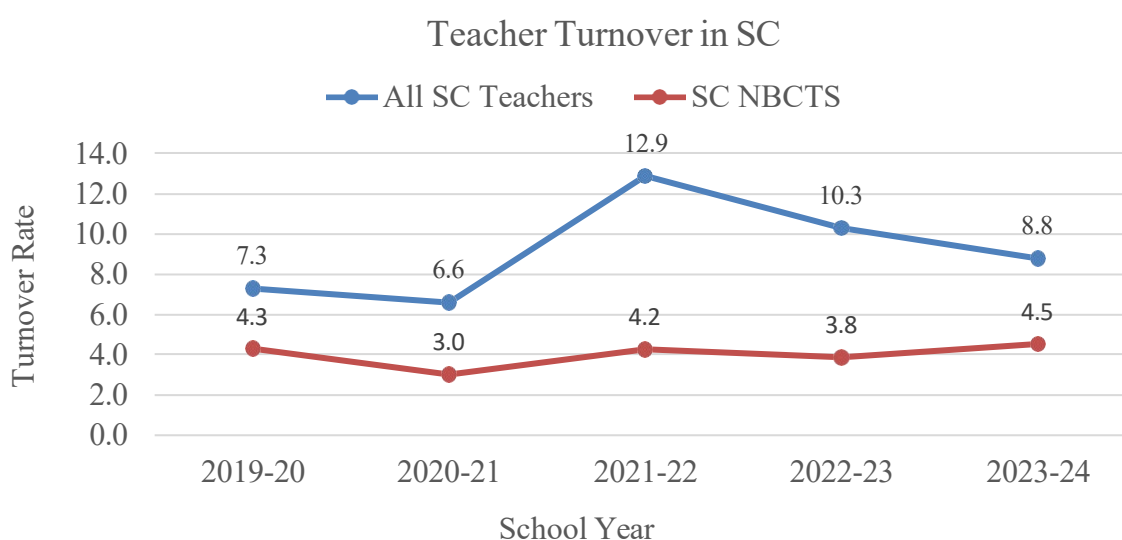
Teaching Fellows Graduates 2000-2020 Cohorts



- Employed in a SC district
- Loan satisfied through teaching; not employed in a SC district
- Loan satisfied through repayment/repayment plus teaching; not employed in a SC district
- In repayment
- In deferment (grace year, graduate school, military, or special request)

Updated: Retaining SC Teachers through National Board Certification

Since 2018, CERRA has released numerous reports indicating significantly lower turnover rates among National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) in SC compared to all teachers in the state. The table below, which has been updated with the most recent data available, displays turnover rates for these two groups of teachers. Specifically looking at the 2023-24 school year, turnover for all SC teachers was 8.8% and only 4.5% for NBCTs in the state. Although rates for both groups have fluctuated over time, attrition among NBCTs has consistently remained lower each year.



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Key Data from CERRA's South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Reports

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Notes: Teacher departures refer to certified SC educators who left the position they held the previous school year. For example, data in the 2024-2025 row include educators from 2023-24 who did not return to a teaching/service position in the same district for the 2024-25 school year. Teaching positions are held by certified educators who provide instruction in a classroom setting, and service positions are held by certified educators who provide instruction and support in a school setting (school counselors, school librarians, school psychologists, and speech language pathologists). Departure and vacancy data are collected from SC school district representatives and presented in full-time equivalents (FTEs).

¹Data obtained from the SC Commission on Higher Education. Includes students who graduated from a SC public or private institution with a Bachelor's degree eligible for initial teacher certification and students who graduated from a SC public institution with a Master's degree eligible for initial teacher certification. Master's level data are not available for private institutions.

Full reports can be accessed at <https://www.cerra.org/o/cerra/page/supply-and-demand>.

July 17, 2025
Sent Via Electronic Mail

Dr. Lishu Yin,
Program Manager of Educator Quality, Retention, and Recruitment
South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
Lyin@che.sc.gov

Dear Dr. Yin:

It is my distinct pleasure to reintroduce myself as the new Executive Director of the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA). I am honored to join a dedicated team committed to strengthening South Carolina's teacher pipeline through strategic efforts in recruitment, retention, and professional advancement.

As we move forward with our **One CERRA** model, we are intentionally working to eliminate silos, streamline our initiatives, and enhance collaboration with key stakeholders. Our goal is to maximize impact and ensure a cohesive, statewide approach to educator support.

In FY25, CERRA collaborated closely with state partners to determine the appropriate Request for Proposal (RFP) process for establishing the **Online Educator Employment System (OEES)**. After evaluating existing state contracts and determining that a familiar vendor product could not be utilized, we initiated the RFP process through state procurement. With the support of both the State Procurement Office and Winthrop University's procurement team, CERRA has developed an RFP that is scheduled for posting in **October 2025**, with vendor selection anticipated by **early 2026**. Our implementation plan for the OEES includes: (1) Training CERRA staff on the new system, (2) Communicating upcoming changes to districts and applicants, (3) Migrating existing job postings and applications, (4) Facilitating district-level training as needed, (6) Updating relevant website content, and (7) Officially launching the new OEES.

Dr. Beth Costner, Chair of the CERRA Board of Directors, and I will be present at the August 6th Committee on Student Services convening to answer any questions and provide further information regarding our programs and initiatives.

Please find attached CERRA's FY25 Program Reports, along with the following supporting documents:

- Cover Letter
- Teaching Fellows Data Sheet
- White Paper on the Retention of National Board-Certified Teachers
- Key Findings from the Supply and Demand Survey
- CERRA's EIA Budget Proposal
- Letter from the Director of SC RISE
- Letter from the Chair of CERRA's Board of Directors

Thank you for your continued support of CERRA's mission.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lindsay Yearta". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lindsay Yearta, PhD
Executive Director
CERRA – South Carolina

Attachments

Funding Source	Amount	Notes
Teacher Recruit Program (H030)	$\$4,552,151 - \$364,172 = \$4,187,979$ At least 78% must be used for Teaching Fellows (\$3,266,623.62)	8% to SC State (1A.6) "...shall distribute eight percent to South Carolina State University to be used only for the operation of a minority teacher recruitment program and therefore shall not be used for the operation of their established general education programs."
Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) (H470)	\$2,231,680	Includes \$200,000 for Online Employment System
Rural Teacher Recruitment	$\$9,748,392 - \$2,150,000 = \$7,598,392$	$\$750,000$ of the funds appropriated in this act to the Department of Education for Rural Teacher Recruitment shall be allocated to the University of South Carolina's College of Education (COE) for the development and implementation of a new teacher recruitment pilot program to be administered by the COE in partnership with the Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ).
		$\$1,400,000$ shall be transferred to South Carolina State University for the implementation and enhancement of a BRIDGE program to recruit minority high school students along the I-95 corridor into the teaching profession...

Description	FY26 Request
Teacher Recruit Program (H030)	\$4,187,979
Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) (H470)	\$1,947,746
Rural Teacher Recruitment ¹	\$7,598,392
Total Budget	\$13,734,117

¹Rural Teacher Recruitment funds requested by CHE but flow through SCDE; CERRA reports to Governor, SCDE, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House

Legislated Categories	Fund Balance as of June 30, 2023	2023-24 EIA Appropriations	Fund Balance as of June 30, 2024	2024-25 EIA Appropriations	Fund Balance as of June 30, 2025	2025-26 Proposed Legislative Ask	2026-27 Proposed Legislative Ask
Rural Teacher Recruitment	\$800,654	\$7,598,392	\$1,195,270	\$7,598,392	\$857,291	\$7,598,392	\$7,598,392
Teacher Recruit Program (H030)	\$0	\$3,904,045	\$0	\$3,904,045	\$0	\$4,187,979	\$4,194,402
CERRA Teaching Fellows Collections	\$5,537,991		\$6,079,883		\$6,901,223.02		
CERRA (H470)	\$0	\$2,031,680	\$130,338	\$2,231,680	\$548,445	\$1,947,746	\$1,991,495
Total	\$6,338,645	\$13,534,117	\$7,405,491	\$13,734,117	\$8,306,959	\$13,734,117	\$13,784,289

Notes

FY26, CERRA will retain \$350,000 for the Rural District Undergraduate Loan Forgiveness Program and return the remaining carryover funds to the SC Department of Education.

CERRA Teaching Fellows Collections

These funds are collected per the Promissory Note from the students who do not complete a Teaching Fellows Program or do not complete their required teaching service. Also included are any carryover funds from H030 and H470 (\$548,445 in FY25). CERRA is allowed to use some of these funds for additional Teaching Fellows awards and to pay salaries and fees for the collection process. CERRA has been instructed to retain a minimum of one year of fellowship awards funds in reserve. Based on the current total, CERRA will make additional Teaching Fellows awards from this account in FY26.

2025-2026 Proposed Legislative Ask (CERRA-H470)

The actual appropriations for H470 is \$2,231,680 but the in direct funding paid from Rural Recruitment was reduced in this line to make the total request match so funding was not counted twice.

2026-2027 Proposed Legislative Ask (CERRA-H470)

The actual appropriations for H470 is \$2,275,429 but the in direct funding paid from Rural Recruitment was reduced in this line to make the total request match so funding was not counted twice.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Available Legislated Funds (including Rural Recruitment and CERRA carryover and Teaching Fellows collections)		Carried forward from FY23 but not used - \$800,654 (RRI)		\$394,616 (RRI) of which \$350,000 to be used for loan forgiveness, all other RRI funds (\$845,270) will be returned to SCDE; \$130,338.25 (Added to Teaching Fellows Collections Account)				
2		FY24		FY25		FY26		FY27	
3	CERRA Programs/Services	2023-24 Budget	2023-24 Expenditures	2024-25 Proposed Budget (Approved 2023)	2024-25 Expenditures	2025-26 Proposed Budget (Approved 2024)	2025-26 Expenditures	2026-2027 Proposed Budget	Notes
4	Rural Recruitment Initiative (RRI)	\$7,484,416	\$6,919,842	\$7,484,416	\$7,650,755	\$7,314,458		\$7,314,458	Full amount allocated and requested for RRI is \$7,598,392 but WU Indirect Fees are removed and added in row 16. Significant effort was made to ensure districts are reducing carry forward and the expenditure amount represents efforts to use carryover.
5	Salaries & Fringes	\$979,189	\$949,451	\$979,189	\$954,203	\$1,022,891		\$1,070,000	The FY26 budget will include the 2% state employee raise for eligible CERRA staff. CERRA is looking forward to FY27 and requesting funds for the redesign of an existing line to support multiple CERRA programs. Specifically the position will be focused on increased digital curricular needs across various CERRA programs. In FY 25, CERRA filled vacant positions and reconfigured roles and responsibilities for others. Specifically, there is now a dedicated program facilitator for Teaching Fellows and the Rural Recruitment Initiative, support for the precollegiate arm was strengthened, and the executive director was hired to begin on July 1, 2025.
6	Office Support	\$25,356	\$36,227	\$25,356	\$31,150	\$30,000		\$30,000	Although costs for materials and services continue to rise, CERRA is seeking additional cost cutting measures and is not asking for an increase in FY27.
7	Expo/Online Educator Employment System (OEES)	\$64,484	\$12,162	\$56,180	\$16,258	\$5,187		\$10,000	Beginning with the FY25 Budget in this line no longer includes the new OEES funds [see below]. The additional decrease in budget in this category represents ongoing system and procedural changes to reduce the cost of activities such as the Expo. As noted that decrease was too high and as such we are requesting a higher budget for FY27.
8	Updated OEES (New Funds)	N/A	N/A	\$200,000	\$0	\$200,000		\$200,000	During FY25 CERRA leadership has worked closely with the state on appropriate RFP processes to establish a new OEES. Existing contracts were examined with the intent to use a vendor product that district partners are already familiar. Once it was determined this was not allowable, the RFP process was begun with state procurement. With the support of that office and Winthrop's procurement team, CERRA has been establishing an RFP. The RFP will be posted in October 2025 (date set by state procurement), with a vendor slated to be selected by early 2026.
9	BOD/Staff Travel	\$59,358	\$79,613	\$59,358	\$64,448	\$82,750		\$81,000	State mileage rates continue to increase. CERRA has strategically worked to (1) utilize virtual meeting resources -provided through Winthrop's contract- and (2) schedule school site visits with intentionality- based on the home addresses of employees across programs. The CERRA board meets four times a year (two meetings are virtual; two are in-person). In FY26, the in-person meetings will be used to examine the current Board by-laws to consider relevancy and systems to ensure oversight and forward planning for the organization.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
10	Minority Recruitment	\$166,500	\$166,500	\$166,500	\$64,098	\$166,500		\$0	Based on the materials we were handed from the previous administration, we listed this line as it had been in the past. We have since learned it would be more accurate to collapse this line into 'pre-collegiate' for FY27 as that better reflects how the funds are being utilized for pre-collegiate recruitment programs across the state.
11	Pre-Collegiate	\$135,000	\$81,271	\$124,000	\$54,902	\$84,714		\$251,214	Pre-collegiate funds can fluctuate based on number of sites with programs. We are looking to increase the number of participating schools and districts in order to strengthen South Carolina's teacher pipeline. Programs impacted are proteam (middle schools) and teacher cadet (high schools as well as their IHE partners).
12	Teaching Fellows	\$4,462,623	\$4,329,667	\$4,381,927	\$4,559,932	\$4,393,188		\$4,393,188	The primary reasons for fluctuations in Teaching Fellows awards and program costs are due cost of attendance calculations, student choices about whether or not to accept the full award, non-employee travel for Teaching Fellows events (e.g. Interview Day), and the amount of experience funds spent by the institutions. In FY25, CERRA will welcome two new Teaching Fellows Programs, which will increase program costs.
13	WU Indirect Fees (H030 and H470 and RRI)	\$157,191	\$434,429	\$157,191	\$388,941	\$434,429		\$434,429	WU Indirect fee rates have not changed for FY27 requests.
14	Total	\$13,534,117	\$13,009,162	\$13,634,117	\$13,784,687	\$13,734,117		\$13,784,289	

Funding Source	Amount	Context
Teacher Recruit Program (H030)	$\$4,243,527 \times 92\% = \$3,904,045$	Pursuant to Proviso 1A.6 (SDE-EIA: CHE/Teacher Recruitment) of the Genral Appropriations Act: (SDE-EIA: CHE/Teacher Recruitment) Of the funds appropriated in Part IA, Section 1, VIII.F. for the Teacher Recruitment Program, the Commission on Higher Education shall distribute a total of ninety-two percent to the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA-South Carolina) for a state teacher recruitment program, of which at least seventy-eight percent must be used for the Teaching Fellows Program specifically to provide scholarships for future teachers, and of which twenty-two percent must be used for other aspects of the state teacher recruitment program, including the Teacher Cadet Program and \$166,302 which must be used for specific programs to recruit minority teachers.
Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) (H470)	\$2,231,680	This line includes \$200,000 for the Online Educator Employment System.
Rural Teacher Recruitment	$\$8,348,392 - \$750,000 = \$7,598,392$	Rural Teacher Recruitment funds total \$8,348,392; the Call Me MISTER program will receive \$750,000. Therefore, the amount allocated to the Rural Recruitment Initiative is \$7,598,392.

Description	FY26 Budget	FY27 Request
Teacher Recruit Program (H030)	\$3,904,045	\$3,904,045
Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) (H470)	\$2,231,680	\$2,231,680
Rural Teacher Recruitment	\$7,598,392	\$7,598,392
Total Budget	\$13,734,117	\$13,734,117

Notes

Rural Teacher Recruitment funds requested by CHE but flow through SCDE; CERRA reports to Governor, SCDE, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House

H030 and H470 appropriations total
\$6,135,725 (\$3,904,045+\$2,231,680)

Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA)

FY25 Report: Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025

Previous Year

	<u>CERRA²</u>	<u>Teacher Recruiting Program</u>	<u>Rural Teacher Recruitment</u>	<u>Employment System</u>	<u>FY25 Total</u>	<u>FY24 Total</u>
APPROPRIATIONS						
Proviso Funding ³	\$ 1,410,443	4,525,282	7,598,392	200,000	\$ 13,734,117	\$ 12,338,559
Carryforward			<u>1,195,275</u>		<u>1,195,275</u>	<u>800,654</u>
Total Appropriations	\$ 1,410,443	4,525,282	8,793,667	200,000	\$ 14,929,392	\$ 13,139,213
EXPENDITURES						
Salaries & Fringe Benefits	\$ 954,203		91,299		\$ 1,045,502	\$ 974,598
Education & Training ¹	351,259		7,189,062		7,540,322	6,798,212
Teaching Fellowships		4,525,282			4,525,282	4,448,107
Loan Forgiveness			370,394		370,394	336,167
Employee Travel	76,117				76,117	75,179
Other	58,810				58,810	72,521
Indirect Cost	<u>165,310</u>		<u>221,313</u>		<u>386,623</u>	<u>434,429</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 1,605,700	4,525,282	7,872,068	-	\$ 14,003,050	\$ 13,139,213
Net	\$ (195,257)	-	921,599	200,000	\$ 926,342	\$ -

Notes

1 - Includes \$166,500 of pre-collegiate programming to support recruitment into teacher education.

2 - CERRA was overspent by approximately \$200k due to additional funding towards Teacher Recruiting Program's Teaching Fellowships, which was covered by reserves.

3 - H030 and H470 appropriations total \$6,135,725 (\$1,410,443+\$4,525,282 +\$200,000)

Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA)

CERRA Reserve Balance

This reserve balance accumulates from intentional underspending and repayments made from individuals that did not complete the requirements of the program. These repayments are held to support the program should funding become inconsistent or programming needs exceed funding appropriations.

	<u>Beginning Balance</u>	<u>Repayments & Reserving</u>	<u>Programming</u>	<u>Ending Balance</u>
June 30, 2024	\$ 5,540,095	694,588	-	\$ 6,234,683
June 30, 2025	\$ 6,234,683	938,478	(195,257)	\$ 6,977,904
				12% increase

We monitor the cohorts that could be supported by the reserve balance alone, considering that each fellow receives \$6,000 per academic year.

		<u>6/30/2026</u>	<u>6/30/2027</u>	<u>6/30/2028</u>	<u>6/30/2029</u>
Freshman	211	1,266,000	1,266,000	1,266,000	1,266,000
Sophomore	222	1,332,000	1,332,000	1,332,000	
Juniors	216	1,296,000	1,296,000		
Seniors	182	<u>1,092,000</u>			
		4,986,000	3,894,000	2,598,000	1,266,000
Reserve Coverage		100%	51%	0%	0%

Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA)

FY26 Budgeted: Fiscal Year to End June 30, 2026

Previous Year

	<u>CERRA</u>	<u>Teacher Recruiting Program</u>	<u>Rural Teacher Recruitment</u>	<u>Employment System¹</u>	<u>FY26 Total</u>	<u>FY25 Total</u>
APPROPRIATIONS						
Proviso Funding ³	\$ 1,410,443	4,525,282	7,598,392	200,000	\$ 13,734,117	\$ 13,734,117
Carryforward			921,599	200,000	1,121,599	1,195,275
Total Appropriations	\$ 1,410,443	4,525,282	8,519,991	400,000	\$ 14,855,716	\$ 14,929,392
EXPENDITURES						
Salaries & Fringe Benefits	\$ 954,203		91,299		\$ 1,045,502	\$ 1,045,502
Education & Training ²	186,003		7,189,062		7,375,065	7,540,322
Teaching Fellowships		4,525,282			4,525,282	4,525,282
Loan Forgiveness			370,394		370,394	370,394
Employee Travel	76,117				76,117	76,117
Other	28,810			400,000	428,810	58,810
Indirect Cost	165,310		221,313		386,623	386,623
Total Expenses	\$ 1,410,443	4,525,282	7,872,068	400,000	\$ 14,207,793	\$ 14,003,050
Net	\$ (0)	-	647,923	-	\$ 647,923	\$ 926,342

Notes

1 - CERRA has \$200,000 budgeted in FY26 plus a carryforward of \$200,000 from FY25 for a total of \$400,000 in funds to launch the Online Educator Employment System.

2 - Includes \$166,500 of pre-collegiate programming to support recruitment into teacher education.

3 - H030 and H470 appropriations total \$6,135,725 (\$1,410,443+\$4,525,282 +\$200,000)

Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA)

FY27 Request: Fiscal Year to End June 30, 2027

Previous Year

	<u>CERRA</u>	<u>Teacher Recruiting Program</u>	<u>Rural Teacher Recruitment</u>	<u>Employment System</u>	<u>FY27 Total</u>	<u>FY26 Budgeted</u>
APPROPRIATIONS						
Proviso Funding ²	\$ 1,410,443	4,525,282	7,598,392	200,000	\$ 13,734,117	\$ 13,734,117
Carryforward			647,923		647,923	1,121,599
Total Appropriations	\$ 1,410,443	4,525,282	8,246,315	200,000	\$ 14,382,040	\$ 14,855,716
EXPENDITURES						
Salaries & Fringe Benefits	\$ 954,203		91,299		\$ 1,045,502	\$ 1,045,502
Education & Training ¹	186,003		7,189,062		7,375,065	7,375,065
Teaching Fellowships		4,525,282			4,525,282	4,525,282
Loan Forgiveness			370,394		370,394	370,394
Employee Travel	76,117				76,117	76,117
Other	28,810			200,000	228,810	428,810
Indirect Cost	165,310		221,313		386,623	386,623
Total Expenses	\$ 1,410,443	4,525,282	7,872,068	200,000	\$ 14,007,793	\$ 14,207,793
Net	\$ (0)	-	374,247	-	\$ 374,247	\$ 647,923

Notes

1 - Includes \$166,500 of pre-collegiate programming to support recruitment into teacher education.

2 - H030 and H470 appropriations total \$6,135,725 (\$1,410,443+\$4,525,282 +\$200,000)

CERRA Responses to CHE Questions Regarding CERRA Program Allocations per Proviso 1A.6 (FY2024-25)

Pursuant to Proviso 1A.6, (SDE-EIA: CHE/Teacher Recruitment) of the General Appropriations Act: directs that of the \$4,243,527 appropriated for teacher recruitment programs: The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education shall distribute a total of ninety-two percent (\$3,904,045)¹ to the Center For Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA South Carolina) for a state teacher recruitment program, of which at least seventy-eight percent must be used for the Teaching Fellows Program specifically to provide scholarships for future teachers, and of which twenty-two percent must be used for other aspects of the state teacher recruitment program including the Teacher Cadet Program and \$166,302 which must be used for specific programs to recruit minority teachers: and shall distribute eight percent (\$339,482)¹ to South Carolina State University to be used for the operation of a minority teacher recruitment program and therefore shall not be used for the operation of their established general education programs.

¹ Amount inserted for reference.

To support compliance and transparency, please respond to the following questions:

- **Program Distribution**

How did CERRA allocate the funds across each program in FY2024-25? Please provide a breakdown by program name and funding amount.

Program	Funding Amount
College Partners	\$32,858
ProTeam	\$9,000
Minority Recruitment	\$166,500
Teacher Cadets	\$42, 856
Teaching Fellows	\$3,171,306

- **Use of Additional Appropriation**

In addition to the appropriation described above, starting from FY2023-24, the General Assembly approved an additional **\$500,000** in recurring funds for CERRA.

- During FY2024-25, what portion of this additional funding was allocated to the **Teaching Fellows Program**?

In FY 2023-2024, the General Assembly approved an additional \$500,000 of which \$134,995 was budgeted for Teaching Fellows. From that additional \$500,000, there was also \$164,227.81 that carried forward to the FY 2024-2025 Teaching Fellows account.

- **Use of the Teaching Fellows Collection Account**

- What was the total amount used from the **CERRA Teaching Fellows Collection Account** to supplement the FY2024-25 Teaching Fellows Program?

\$1,342,670.76

- How many students were funded by the **FY2024-25 appropriation**?

826

- How many were funded using **Collection Account** funds?

We track funded Teaching Fellows as a collective; therefore, we can say with certainty that 826 Fellows were funded in FY25.

- What is the **total amount collected** in the **Teaching Fellows Collection Account** to date? What is the amount collected in FY2024-25?

The total amount collected in the Teaching Fellows Collection Account is \$6,901,223.02. This balance rolls year over year since the account's inception.

The amount collected in FY2024-2025 was \$821,340.02.

- How many Teaching Fellows **returned funds to the state** in FY2024-25?

In FY 2024-2025, we had Teaching Fellows funds returned by six students from three institutions:

- Francis Marion University: 2 Teaching Fellows – a total of \$2,100
- College of Charleston: 1 Teaching Fellow- a total of \$300
- Lander University: 3 Teaching Fellows- a total of \$3,520

- **Allocation for Other State Teacher Recruitment Programs**

A total of **\$692,587.86** (22%) is designated for other teacher recruitment initiatives (outside of the Teaching Fellows Program).

- How many distinct state teacher recruitment programs are included in this category?

We have two distinct programmatic teacher recruitment initiatives - outside of the Teaching Fellows Program - that are included in the above category: (1) ProTeam is

geared toward academically talented middle grades students, and (2) Teacher Cadets is a set of nationally recognized, curriculum-based, college-credit bearing courses. Both programs are designed to attract talented young people into the education profession.

- How were these funds allocated among them?

In FY 2025, ProTeam cost \$111,477; Teacher Cadets and College Partners cost a total of \$461,932. These calculations include programmatic operating costs such as salaries, fringe, and travel.

○ **Carryforward Funds**

- What is the total amount of **carryforward funds** available to CERRA for use in FY2024-25?

CERRA has zero carryforward funds available in FY 2024-2025. As was submitted in our State of South Carolina Contribution Expenditure Report – CHE (submitted 6/19/2025), CERRA overspent in the area of Teaching Fellows awards by \$1,093,914.88.

From: [Yearta, Lindsay Sheronick](#)
To: [Yin, Lishu](#)
Cc: [Costner, Beth Greene](#); [Arlene Crisco](#); [Woodfaulk, Karen](#)
Subject: Re: [External] CERRA Program Reports & Budget Request
Date: Thursday, July 17, 2025 2:17:32 PM
Attachments: [Attachment 1 Cover Letter.pdf](#)
[Attachment 2 CERRA's Program Report Fiscal Year 2025.pdf](#)
[Attachment 3 Teaching Fellows Data Sheet.pdf](#)
[Attachment 4 WhitePaper RetentionNBCT March 2025 .pdf](#)
[Attachment 5 Supply and Demand Key Data .pdf](#)
[Attachment 6 EIA Budget Proposal.pdf](#)
[Attachment 7 CERRAboard letter.pdf](#)
[Attachment 8 SC Rise Letter.pdf](#)

Lishu,

Thank you for your feedback. Our team has worked diligently to clean up these documents and attend to your suggestions. I have reattached the PDFs for ease of access and have addressed your concerns below.

1. **Carryforward Funds:** Please provide the total amount of carryforward funds.
The carryforward funds can be found on page 3 of Attachment 6 (revised) EIA Budget Proposal. We will carry forward \$6,901,232 in Teaching Fellows Collections and \$548,445 from H030 and H470.

2. **Discrepancy in FY25 Expenditures:**

In the Board letter, it says, *"The Committee also considered the 2% employee salary increase approved by the state. Due to some modest salary savings from understaffing in FY25, we are able to absorb these increases for one year"*.

This suggests that CERRA had unused funds for FY25. However, Attachment 5 (p.5, Row 14), shows an FY25 expenditure of **\$13,784,687** against an allocation of **\$13,734,117**, indicating CERRA overspent \$50,570.

Dr. Costner revised her letter for clarity regarding salary increases. Please see attached.

3. **Salary Increase Effective Year:** The statewide salary increase approved starts from FY26. Please clarify which fiscal year you refer to?

Dr. Costner revised her letter for clarity on the fiscal year. Please see attached.

4. **\$200,000 Allocation Omission:** An allocation of \$200,000 was approved for FY25, but in Attachment 5 (p.5, Row 7), the amount is marked "N/A."

Please clarify why this amount is not reflected in the report.

The \$200,000 was on line 7, page 4 of Attachment 6. We have revised the document by moving the \$200,000 in FY25 to the **OEEs funds** line to better track that spending.

5. Vacant Position and Staffing:

In the Board Letter, it states, “we identified the need to redesign a previously existing role to emphasize digital content creation in support of curriculum development and teacher recruitment across programs. As a result, one position will remain vacant in FY26, with a request to fund and fill that position in FY27”.

Please specify the budget amount requested for this position in FY27 and confirm the number of staff currently budgeted for FY25.

This is clarified in the board letter.

6. Minority Recruitment Expenditures

Attachment 5 Row, p.5, row 10, the allocation was \$166,500 and the expenditure was \$64,098. *“These funds are directly funneled to South Carolina State for project activity”*. Please explain the work done for the Minority Recruitment for FY25. How did CERRA reallocate the unused funds of \$102,402.

Based on the materials we were handed from the previous administration, we listed this line as it had been in the past. We have sought and provided clarification in attachment 6. These funds are primarily used for site grants for our pre-collegiate recruitment programs across the state. As such, we are asking to collapse that line into the 'pre-collegiate' line for FY27.

Again, thank you for your continued support of CERRA-
Lindsay

Lindsay Yearta, PhD

Executive Director

SC Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement

Winthrop University

College of Education, Sport, and Human Sciences

402B Withers / W.T.S. Building

Rock Hill, SC 29733

803 / 323—4032 ext 6411

yearta@CERRA.org

yeartaL@winthrop.edu

www.cerra.org

From: Yin, Lishu <Lyn@che.sc.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 16, 2025 5:17 PM
To: Yearta, Lindsay Sheronick <yeartal@winthrop.edu>
Cc: Costner, Beth Greene <costnerb@winthrop.edu>; Arlene Crisco <criscoa@cerra.org>; Woodfaulk, Karen <kwoodfaulk@che.sc.gov>
Subject: RE: [External] CERRA Program Reports & Budget Request

Lindsay,

Good afternoon!

Upon initial review, please address the following and submit responses by 2:00 pm, tomorrow:

1. **Carryforward Funds:** Please provide the total amount of carryforward funds.
2. **Discrepancy in FY25 Expenditures:**
In the Board letter, it says, "The Committee also considered the 2% employee salary increase approved by the state. Due to some modest salary savings from understaffing in FY25, we are able to absorb these increases for one year".

This suggests that CERRA had unused funds for FY25. However, Attachment 5 (p.5, Row 14), shows an FY25 expenditure of **\$13,784,687** against an allocation of **\$13,734,117**, indicating CERRA overspent \$50,570.

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Please specify the budget amount requested for this position in FY27 and confirm the number of staff currently budgeted for FY25.

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By the way, I've attached the August 6 Committee meeting agenda to this email for your reference. Dr. Woodfaulk will be sending all related documents to the CHE Board members at least two weeks in advance of the meeting for their review.

With that in mind, it is essential that we receive your responses no later than **2:00 pm tomorrow**. We are unable to prepare the necessary memo until all required documentation has been submitted.

Thank you for your attention to these items. Please don't hesitate to reach out if anything is unclear or if you need further assistance.

Lishu

From: Yearta, Lindsay Sheronick <yeartal@winthrop.edu>

Sent: Tuesday, July 15, 2025 4:38 PM

To: Yin, Lishu <Lyn@che.sc.gov>

Cc: Costner, Beth Greene <costnerb@winthrop.edu>; Arlene Crisco <criscoa@cerra.org>

Subject: [External] CERRA Program Reports & Budget Request

Dear Dr. Yin:

It is my distinct pleasure to reintroduce myself as the new Executive Director of the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA). I am honored to join a dedicated team committed to strengthening South Carolina's teacher pipeline through strategic efforts in recruitment, retention, and professional advancement.

As we move forward with our **One CERRA** model, we are intentionally working to eliminate silos, streamline our initiatives, and enhance collaboration with key stakeholders. Our goal is to maximize impact and ensure a cohesive, statewide approach to educator support.

In FY25, CERRA collaborated closely with state partners to determine the appropriate Request for Proposal (RFP) process for establishing the **Online Educator Employment System (OEES)**. After evaluating existing state contracts and determining that a familiar vendor product could not be utilized, we initiated the RFP process through state

procurement. With the support of both the State Procurement Office and Winthrop University's procurement team, CERRA has developed an RFP that is scheduled for posting in **October 2025**, with vendor selection anticipated by **early 2026**. Our implementation plan for the OEES includes: (1) Training CERRA staff on the new system, (2) Communicating upcoming changes to districts and applicants, (3) Migrating existing job postings and applications, (4) Facilitating district-level training as needed, (5) Updating relevant website content, and (6) Officially launching the new OEES.

Dr. Beth Costner, Chair of the CERRA Board of Directors, and I will be available at your discretion to answer any questions and provide further information regarding our programs and initiatives.

Please find attached CERRA's FY25 Program Reports, along with the following supporting documents:

- Teaching Fellows Data Sheet
- White Paper on the Retention of National Board-Certified Teachers
- Key Findings from the Supply and Demand Survey
- CERRA's EIA Budget Proposal
- Letter from the Director of SC RISE
- Letter from the Chair of CERRA's Board of Directors

Thank you for your continued support of CERRA's mission.

Lindsay

Lindsay Yearta, PhD

Executive Director

SC Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement

Winthrop University

College of Education, Sport, and Human Sciences

402B Withers / W.T.S. Building

Rock Hill, SC 29733

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yearta@CERRA.org

yeartaL@winthrop.edu

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Dr. Beth Greene Costner
 Chair, CERRA Board of Directors
 Withers Building
 Rock Hill SC 29733

July 15, 2025

SC CHE Board of Commissioners
 Committee on Student Services
 1122 Lady Street, Suite
 Columbia, SC 29201

Committee on Student Services:

The Executive Committee (Committee) of the CERRA Board of Directors (Board) serves as a special advisory group to the Executive Director and/or the Board. It has the authority to act on behalf of the Board in matters related to budget, policy, special appeals/requests, and other business.

The Committee met with Dr. Yearta shortly after she assumed her role to review past practices and current program needs. During this meeting, we confirmed the FY26 budget request of \$13,734,117—consistent with FY24 and FY25—with the only exception being the recurring funds added in FY25 for the Online Educator Employment System (OEEs). The Committee also considered the 2% employee salary increase approved by the state. Due to some modest salary savings from understaffing in FY25, we are able to absorb these increases for one year.

During work with Dr. Yearta we have discovered a need to present the budget using broader categories. This approach better reflects the interconnected nature of programming in precollegiate areas (ProTeam, Teacher Cadet, and College Partners) and allows for the consolidation of travel funding for both staff and Board members. These adjustments will enable more flexible use of funds in response to annual shifts in priorities and needs.

The Committee also discussed the impact of recent increases in statewide educator salaries on the recruitment of CERRA staff. In response, we identified the need to redesign a previously existing role to emphasize digital content creation in support of curriculum development and teacher recruitment across programs. As a result, one position will remain vacant in FY26, with a request to fund and fill that position in FY27. At the same time, the Committee will continue monitoring expenses to refine our cost projections and support program expansion while keeping operational expenses—such as materials and travel—low.

Finally, the Committee has been closely monitoring the implementation of the OEEs throughout FY25. In spring 2025, during the transition following the retirement of the former Executive Director, the State Procurement Office determined that a full Request for Proposal (RFP) process was required, as existing state agreements did not cover development of this system as first thought. With assistance from Winthrop University's Procurement Office, CERRA initiated the RFP process. All required documentation was submitted during FY25, and we have been notified that the RFP will be posted in fall 2025, with an award anticipated in early 2026. The \$200,000 allocated in FY25 will be reserved for initial development costs, and the additional \$200,000 in FY26 will support training and implementation efforts.

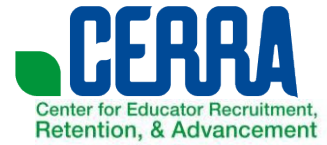
Please feel free to contact Dr. Yearta or me with any additional questions or concerns. Thank you for your continued support of CERRA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Beth Greene Costner".

Beth Greene Costner, PhD
 Chair, CERRA Board of Directors

Updated Version of the July 15 Letter



Dr. Beth Greene Costner
Chair, CERRA Board of Directors
Withers Building
Rock Hill SC 29733

July 15, 2025

SC CHE Board of Commissioners
Committee on Student Services
1122 Lady Street, Suite
Columbia, SC 29201

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The Committee met with Dr. Yearta shortly after she assumed her role to review past practices and current program needs. During this meeting, we confirmed the FY26 budget request of \$13,734,117, consistent with FY24 and FY25—with the only exception being the recurring funds added in FY25 for the Online Educator Employment System (OEEs). The Committee also considered the 2% employee salary increase approved by the state for FY26. CERRA will be able to absorb these increases within the current budget request.

CERRA currently employs 11 full-time and two part-time staff members. Traditionally, the organization has employed 12 full-time and two part-time staff. The Committee has requested that the open full-time position, currently associated with the precollegiate program, remain unfilled in FY26. The resulting savings will allow CERRA to fund the 2% raises for eligible employees in FY26.

The Committee also discussed the impact of recent increases in statewide educator salaries on CERRA's ability to recruit qualified staff. When hiring experienced educators, it has become common for the salary allocated to a vacant position to be insufficient to attract a similarly qualified replacement. As such, the Committee and Dr. Yearta recognize that the salary currently allocated for the vacant line will not be adequate to hire a new employee in FY27.

To address this, the Committee identified the need to redesign the vacant position (which will remain unfilled in FY26) to emphasize digital content creation in support of curriculum development and teacher recruitment across programs. The Committee recommends that CERRA request additional funding in FY27 to fill this restructured position, with a proposed increase of \$47,109 to cover salary and benefits. It is also important to note that the redesign will eliminate the need for one of the two part-time positions. Therefore, in FY27, the proposed staffing model will include 12 full-time and one part-time employee.

In collaboration with Dr. Yearta, the Committee also identified the need to present the budget using broader categories. This approach better reflects the interconnected nature of programming in the precollegiate areas (ProTeam, Teacher Cadet, and College Partners) and allows for the consolidation of travel funding for staff and Board members. These adjustments will enable more efficient use of funds and greater flexibility in responding to annual shifts in goals and needs. The Committee will continue monitoring expenses to improve cost projections and support program expansion while keeping operational costs—such as materials and travel—low.

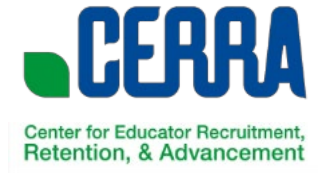
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Please feel free to contact Dr. Yearta or me with any additional questions or concerns. Thank you for your continued support of CERRA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Beth Greene Costner', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Beth Greene Costner, PhD
Chair, CERRA Board of Directors



August 12, 2025
Sent Via Electronic Mail

Dr. Lishu Yin,
Program Manager of Educator Quality, Retention, and Recruitment
South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
Lyin@che.sc.gov

Dear Dr. Yin,

CERRA's mission is to advance the education profession in South Carolina through strategic recruitment and retention initiatives. In pursuit of this mission, we are actively working toward four key goals:

1. Respond innovatively to existing and emerging teacher recruitment needs
2. Seek to diversify funding streams in order to enhance organizational sustainability
3. Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing and awareness campaign
4. Work to eliminate existing barriers that prevent access to critical data

Looking ahead to FY26, we are excited about several new initiatives. We are collaborating with key stakeholders across the state on multiple research projects, continuing to support future and current educators through high-impact programs, and launching the new Online Educator Employment System.

In alignment with our commitment to fiscal responsibility and operational transparency, we will be conducting an audit of our financial practices. In preparation for this process, we have begun working closely with Jennifer Lewis, Associate Vice President for Fiscal Services and Controller at Winthrop University. With her expertise and guidance, we have completed revisions to the FY25 Report, FY26 Budget, and FY27 Budget Request. Please refer to the attached documents for further detail.

Our goal in enhancing the reporting process this fiscal year is to promote transparency, ensure the accuracy of financial data, and present information in a clear, accessible format that supports informed decision-making moving forward.

Thank you for your continued support of CERRA's mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lindsay Yearta". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Lindsay Yearta, PhD

Executive Director, CERRA

Attachments