

Program Planning Summary

For the

Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood and Elementary Education

To be offered by the

University of South Carolina Upstate School of Education

On the Campus of the

University of South Carolina Lancaster



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**John C. Stockwell, Chancellor**  
**University of South Carolina Upstate**



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Andrew Sorensen, President  
University of **South** Carolina

February 1, 2007

**Name of Proposed Program(s):** Early Childhood Education  
Elementary Education

**Proposed Date of Implementation:** August 2007

**Designation, Type and Level of Degree:** Bachelor of Arts

**Identification of Program:** Program Modification

**Description of the Modification:**

We propose to modify the existing Bachelor of Arts degree in Early Childhood and Education and the Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education, now offered on the USC Upstate Campus by offering the two programs on the USC Lancaster campus at which more than 50% of the required course work will be taken. The general education curriculum will be completed at USC Lancaster within the scope of the articulated Associate in Arts degree. The proposed programs are modeled after programs now being offered by the USC Upstate School of Education on the USC Sumter campus. The proposed programs are in full compliance with state and national standards and will remain under the direction and authority of the dean of the USC Upstate School of Education. The dean will approve all program operations, courses, and instructors for the USC Lancaster site. All instructors teaching in the two programs will be fully credentialed in the areas of their teaching specialty as required by our state and national accreditation agencies. A full-time assistant/associate professor level on-site Coordinator for the program will be employed by USC Upstate to advise candidates, develop programs of study, assist in the scheduling of courses and monitor the overall implementation of the program. USC Upstate is uniquely qualified to administer the two programs as a similar and highly successful program at Sumter has received recognition by the University of South Carolina System president as an exemplary model and has encouraged other system member institutions to replicate this program in other areas of the state.

**Justification of need for the proposed program:**

Personnel directors in the Lancaster area explained in interviews that they continue to face a teacher shortage resulting from several factors, including a significant number of teachers reaching retirement age within the next five to ten years; a shrinking pool of education graduates willing to work in rural areas; and phenomenal growth in the Buford and Indian Land areas of their county. Administrators in these rural areas report that they have difficulty finding qualified teachers who fit in with the school and community and who are willing to stay on the job. Recent graduates are less willing to adopt a rural lifestyle.

A British Columbia study that found that teachers sought jobs in rural communities and stayed because of their having been reared in a rural community, their spouse's employment or their other ties to the community, and satisfaction with a rural type of lifestyle (Murphy & Angelski, 1996/1997). While nearly half of U.S. public schools are located in rural areas (Harmon, 1997) and one-quarter of the nation's children attend rural or small-town schools (Beeson, 2001), attracting well-qualified teachers into rural areas is a matter of great concern. The problem has become even more acute with the escalating teacher shortage. Urban areas tend to feel the teacher shortage primarily in special education and in such disciplines as mathematics, science,

and foreign language (The Rural School and Community Trust, 2001), while rural areas are likely to experience teacher shortages across all grades and subject areas. Even when teachers choose rural education, the realities of rural schools often result in teachers being given fewer rewards and more responsibilities than their urban counterparts. Many rural teachers are concerned about professional isolation (Beeson, 2001; Crews, 2002; Ferrandino, 2001). For the most part, they are generally more removed from universities and professional resources than their urban counterparts. In addition, teachers may be hesitant about accepting positions in rural schools because they fear being isolated from hospitals, specialized services, large shopping areas, entertainment centers, and other big-city amenities (Crews, 2002).

School administrators in the rural areas must be able to target candidates from rural backgrounds or with personal characteristics or educational experiences that predispose them to live in rural areas. Various "grow-your-own" strategies offer incentives to local residents with potential to become teachers, such as assisting them in obtaining the needed education and training (Murphy & Angelski, 1996/1997). The proposed program offering BA degrees in early childhood education and elementary education is a prime example of a "grow-your-own" strategy cited in this study. Offering a four-year program at USC Lancaster will certainly increase the teacher pool in this area with potential candidates who are comfortable with a rural lifestyle. In addition, this program provides an excellent opportunity for mature students in these rural areas who want to return to school for a four year degree but because of family situations cannot relocate or commute.

In fall 2005, The USC Upstate School of Education conducted a survey of the K-12 school districts in Lancaster, York, Chester, Chesterfield, Fairfield and Kershaw Counties. Personnel directors were asked to specify the number of early childhood teachers and elementary teachers on staff, and the approximate number of years to retirement for each teacher. Personnel directors from the various school districts identified 3,146 early childhood and elementary teachers currently on staff. Approximately two thirds of these teachers are within five to ten years of retirement, with a significant number retiring from early childhood and elementary positions. These positions must be filled by teachers who have South Carolina teaching credentials and are "highly qualified" in accordance with No Child Left Behind legislation. Moreover, anticipated rising student enrollments coupled with the impending retirements will help fuel an even greater demand for this program. As late as January 2007, the South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Assessment (CERRA) reported an elementary teaching vacancy in Chester County, an elementary teaching vacancy in Chesterfield County, two elementary vacancies and one early childhood vacancy in Fairfield County.

#### **Anticipated program demand and productivity:**

Students at USC Lancaster were surveyed, with nearly 200 of the 1100 students enrolled expressing an interest in education as a major. Those interested in education were surveyed with two thirds expressing an interest in transferring to USC Upstate in order to major in either early childhood or elementary education. Based upon this data, an initial enrollment in the two programs of 10 – 15 students is anticipated. Projected growth of the program, based upon USC Lancaster enrollment projections is presented in the table below.

**Anticipated program demand and productivity**

Year	Fall		Spring		Summer	
	Headcount	Credit Hours	Headcount	Credit Hours	Headcount	Credit Hours
2007-2008	25	200	23	184	9	54
2008-2009	40	320	38	300	12	72
2009-2010	50	400	48	384	15	90

**Assessment of the extent to which the proposed program duplicates existing programs in the state:**

Twenty one teacher preparation programs in the state offer the early childhood and elementary education programs. Of this number, only four institutions; Winthrop University, Columbia International University, Columbia College, Benedict University are located within the general service area to these rural school districts. These programs are offered completely on campus and are not accessible via distance technology; thus making them inaccessible to this rural population. For this reason, the dean at USC Lancaster requested that USC Upstate offer these degrees modeled after our program at USC Sumter. A unique feature of this proposed early childhood and elementary program is that the entire program is available on the USC Lancaster campus via a combination of compressed video, face-to-face and online technology

**Relationship of the proposed program to existing programs at the proposing institution:**

There is an existing program operating under the authority of the USC Upstate School of Education at the University of South Carolina at Sumter. The Sumter program requires the completion of the Associates of Arts degree (60 semester credits from USC Sumter). Required courses are clearly identified in program materials with program requirements for admission and matriculation stipulated in a Memorandum of Agreement, which specifies USC Upstate as well as USC Sumter campus responsibilities. These curricula are identical to the USC Upstate curricula offered on its Spartanburg campus, consisting of 127 credit hours for early childhood and 129 – 130 credit hours for elementary education.

**Relationship of the proposed program to other institutions via inter-institutional cooperation**

This program extension to USC Lancaster will be added as a component of a pre-existing articulation agreement between USC Sumter, Greenville Technical College, and Spartanburg Community College.

**Total new costs associated with implementing the proposed program.**

New costs required for this program modification in the first year of operation will be employment by USC Upstate of a new faculty/director to coordinate the program. An additional faculty member located on the USC Lancaster campus will be added in the second year of operation. A significant number of the courses will be conducted via compressed video and will be taught simultaneously on the Spartanburg, Sumter and Lancaster campuses. Current USC Upstate faculty teaching courses in this program will do so either as part of their normal teaching loads, as summer school instruction or as extra compensation.