

# **Nine Greenville County Teachers are First to Earn Project-Based Learning Credential**

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(<http://gsabizwire.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/PBL-photo-cropped.jpg>)

GREENVILLE, S.C.—Nine Greenville County school teachers are the first to earn South Carolina’s new project-based learning (PBL) endorsement, a state approved add-on teaching credential.

The three-course, in-depth PBL endorsement is the first of its kind in the country. It was developed by the Riley Institute at Furman, Claflin University, College of Charleston, Furman University, Winthrop University, and the South Carolina Department of Education. Experts from New Tech Network and educators teaching in South Carolina’s PBL schools also participated in the process.

Teachers completing the endorsement are: Sonja Bryant, Berea High School; Richard Cecere, Woodmont High School; Amanda Cole, Monarch Elementary School; Jigna Desai, Greenville High School; Kelly Dill, Mountain View Elementary Schools; Jonathan Dorn, Eastside High School; Sally Eastman, Woodmont High School; and Stacia Turkenburg, Greer High School.

Tuition assistance was provided to participating teachers through the federal Investing in Innovation grant won by the Riley Institute in partnership with New Tech Network and KnowledgeWorks.

“High quality project-based learning engages students in complex, real-world problem-solving that helps them master knowledge and grow important teamwork, analytical and communication skills,” said Cathy Stevens of the Riley Institute. “Research shows that well-designed, well-delivered PBL improves education outcomes for all kinds of students, and we want to help make it happen across the state.”

The teachers completed nine credit hours of coursework, including a full-semester practicum, through Furman University’s graduate studies. They began with a PBL immersion course in summer 2015, and worked through the 2015-16 fall and spring terms attending class meetings part-time while integrating the new instructional practices into their teaching. The coursework is currently or soon to be offered by Claflin, College of Charleston and Winthrop universities, and the development team has made the curriculum, coursework, syllabi and resources available to all schools.

With support from the South Carolina Department of Education, the coursework for the endorsement was approved by the State Board of Education in fall of 2014 and the South Carolina legislature in spring of 2015.

“Information we collected from the teachers who completed the coursework showed an overwhelmingly positive response to this instructional model,” said Troy Terry, Director of Graduate Studies at Furman. “We’ve heard from teachers who believe their teaching is not only improved, but energized in new ways. Now other districts are on board to offer the courses to their teachers,” added Terry.

For more information about the PBL teaching endorsement, contact Cathy Stevens at the Riley Institute at Furman, 864-294-3265 or email [cathy.stevens@furman.edu](mailto:cathy.stevens@furman.edu). For more information regarding PBL in Greenville County schools, contact Christine Burras at [cburras@greenville.k12.sc.us](mailto:cburras@greenville.k12.sc.us). For more information regarding PBL in Spartanburg District 6, contact Dawn Mitchell at [mitchelld@spart6.org](mailto:mitchelld@spart6.org).

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