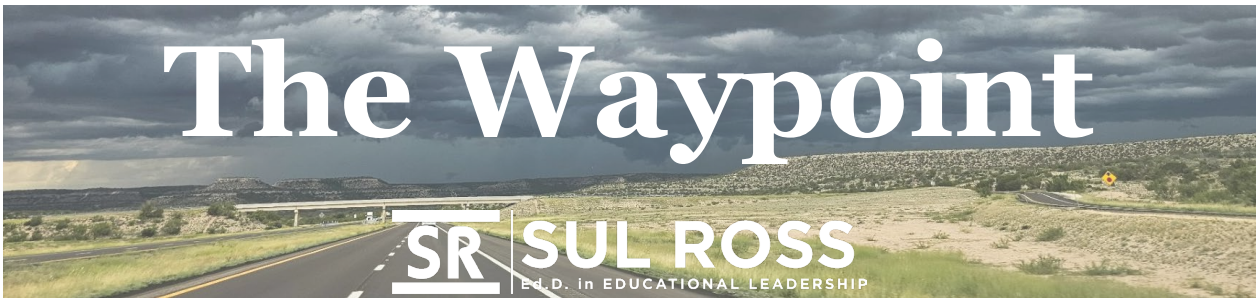


Newsletter Issue 3 November 2026

SRSU Represented at 2026 CPED Convening



Program Director Dr. John Decman and doctoral program faculty member Dr. Jane Cooper recently attended the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) Convening in Corpus Christi. Centered on the theme *Honoring the Past to Move the EdD Forward with Purpose*, the convening brought together faculty and leaders from CPED-affiliated institutions across the country to explore how Ed.D. programs can better prepare scholarly practitioners to lead meaningful change in their communities.

When asked what they took away from the experience and what it means for Sul Ross candidates, both faculty members reflected on the importance of continual program improvement, collaboration, and creating clearer pathways for candidate growth.

“Meeting with faculty from other high-quality CPED programs enabled us to think deeply about integrating rigorous doctoral work into our educational leadership doctorate program. I focused especially on reflecting on our moral obligation to ‘develop better leaders to make

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change in their contexts' (Kate Hopgood).
I was struck by the reminder that academic writing is a dominant cultural gatekeeper, and a specific genre of language, that can be learned through scaffolding (Kati Strom, UCSF). This prompted me to consider how we can continue making complex ideas more accessible to my students, as well as the ongoing moral and ethical obligation to make transparent the often-opaque language, or invisible curriculum, of the academy. Creating pedagogical opportunities that help students envision a possible future as members of a community of educational scholars is essential. Such opportunities transform not only the individual students we serve but also amplify the impact those transformational leaders can have within their own communities.

The collaborative learning and challenges to my thinking have helped me reframe and reground my approach to the research curriculum for the upcoming semester. I am grateful for the CPED community and look forward to continuing to build capacity within our Sul Ross Ed.D. program." – Dr. Cooper.

While Dr. Cooper's reflections focused on accessibility, scholarship, and supporting candidates as they develop as educational researchers, Dr. Decman emphasized the value of collaboration within the CPED network and the role those conversations play in continually improving the doctoral experience.

"CPED is a working network. Most conferences gather people to present finished work. The CPED convening gathers programs that are still building, still improving, and asks them to think out loud together. Faculty bring their design problems, stories, and successes to the table. Colleagues from across the country push on them, and, in many of the rooms, the outcome is thought-provoking.

It is also a gathering of friends. Some of these colleagues I have known for more than two decades. Our institutions are very different. The work is the same. So is the reason for it. We want to make a difference. We carry an obligation to the profession. We share the stories and the laughter that come from years of doing this work side by side, while also from a distance. The week gave me time to step back… to be grateful, and to look ahead. In reflecting on the many conversations, I realized that, in certain organizations, we all have many unofficial critical friends. I spent the week with a good number of mine.
This was my second convening. Each one has surfaced something I had not fully considered.

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Last year it was writing. I left convinced that doctoral-level writing had to be built into every course in the program. That conviction reshaped how we designed our curriculum.
This year it was the path to the Dissertation in Practice. I spent time with programs that resemble ours in important ways. I saw how they scaffold the DiP across the program, one iteration at a time. Somewhere in those conversations, we made an important mental leap. The path to the DiP is a path of learning. The chapters record that learning, but the chapters are not the goal. We would not have reached that understanding without the colleagues in those rooms.

Dr. Cooper's presence made the difference. Several times during the week, we met and debriefed and discussed concepts we took from various sessions. We worked through implications together while the ideas were fresh. By the end of the week, we had weighed many possible next steps and settled on a few provisional paths.

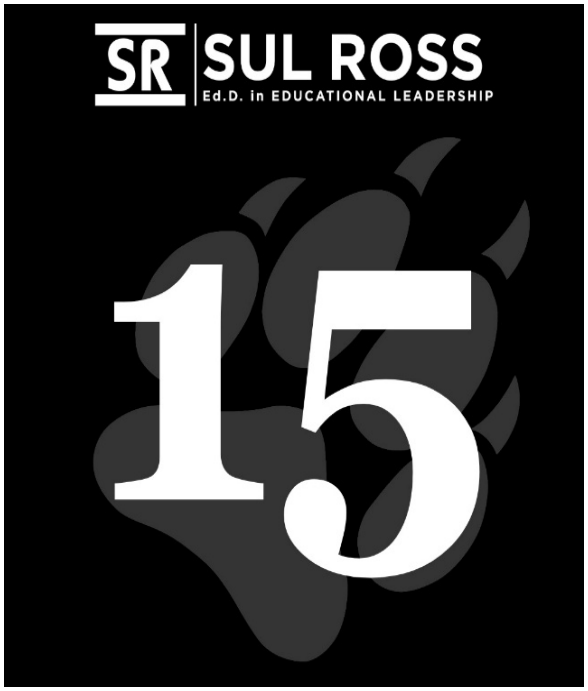
What does that mean for our candidates? A path to the dissertation built around their growth as scholars and leaders. Fewer moments when the next step feels hidden. And a program that keeps learning from its peers and brings that learning home to the people it serves." – Dr. Decman.

The CPED convening reinforced an important principle of the Educational Doctorate: programs themselves must engage in the same cycles of inquiry, learning, and improvement that they ask of their candidates. As Sul Ross faculty continue to learn alongside colleagues from institutions across the country, that learning returns home through program design, curriculum development, and clearer pathways for candidate success.

Important Dates

- **November 19, 2026**
  Webinar: Is an Ed.D. the next right step?
- **Cohort 2 begins Summer 2027**

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Program Highlight

Fifteen is not arbitrary. It is the maximum size of every SRSU Ed.D. cohort, and we chose it on purpose. At this size, no one is peripheral. Each member is a voice that shapes shared inquiry, a resource others rely on, and part of what makes a cohort of leaders more than the sum of its parts. Each cohort is intentionally composed to reflect the diversity of the SRSU service area and a range of leadership roles, forming a Networked Improvement Community from day one. The impact does not stay in the classroom. It returns to the communities our leaders serve.

Fifteen seats. Cohort 2 begins Summer 2027.

Join us November 19 for 'Is an Ed.D. the next right step?'

Cohort 1 Snapshot



Carlin Grammer has been married to the love of his life, Penni, for 35 years. They have 4 adult children (Missy, Niki, Darryl, and Austin) and 4 beautiful grandchildren (Ella, Laura, Ethan, and Clara). Carlin grew up in the small West Texas Town of Imperial and graduated from Buena Vista High School. He earned his B.S. and M.Ed. degrees from Sul Ross.

Carlin began his educational career in 1998 after working in the oil and gas industry for 13 years. He started as a Special Education and Accounting teacher at 3A Crane High School in Crane, TX. After obtaining his Master's in Education in 2002, Mr. Grammer was named the Crane Elementary Principal for the 2003-04 school year. He served in that position for two years before being named the Crane High School principal, a position he held for nine years. Mr. Grammer was named Region 18 Principal of the Year at Crane. He was also named to the Board of Directors for the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals, the largest state principal organization in the United States.

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In 2014, Carlin accepted a position as Principal for 6A Midland High School. MHS had been identified as a "Needs Improvement" campus the year before he arrived. His team recovered the campus and maintained an acceptable rating for the remainder of his tenure.

In 2017, Carlin was offered and accepted the position of Principal for La Porte High School. He served as principal for 7 years. He then became principal of Copperas Cove High School in 2024. Carlin was admitted to the SRSU Ed.D. while serving as principal of Copperas Cove High School, and he continues to bring that campus leadership experience to his work in the cohort.

Carlin is an active member of the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals (TASSP), where he served on various committees, served on the Board of Directors, served as an Executive Officer, and finally served as President of TASSP for the 2025-2026 school year. He remains a member of TASSP and the National Principals Association, formerly known as the Nat'l Association of Secondary School Principals.

As a semi-retired educator, Carlin works as an independent Educational Leadership Consultant and Field Supervisor for intern teachers for the University of Texas of the Permian Basin. He is a Maxwell Leadership certified speaker, coach, and trainer.

Carlin has always loved learning, and even though he has retired, he does not believe his professional journey in education has ended. He previously completed an Ed.D. program at another university, where he was ABD (All But Dissertation). Carlin has always regretted not finishing the program, and when he learned that his alma mater, SRSU, was offering a program, he was immediately interested and excited to be part of it.

Carlin's proposed Problem of Practice centers around the leadership and professional development needs of principals in the isolated schools of the Texas borderlands. He looks forward to his research to determine whether, and what, problems may exist due to the geographic, linguistic, and cultural isolation of leaders in the region and what solutions can be developed as a result.

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Ed.D. Program FAQ

How is an Ed.D. different from a Ph.D.?

An Ed.D. is a professional practice doctorate focused on applying research to solve real-world problems and improve organizational outcomes. A Ph.D. is a research doctorate focused on generating new theoretical knowledge and preparing scholars for academic careers. The Ed.D. prepares scholar-practitioners who lead improvement in educational and organizational settings.

Can I work full-time while in the program?

Yes. The program is specifically designed for working professionals. You will apply your learning immediately in your current organizational context, making doctoral study enhance rather than compete with your professional responsibilities.

How long does the program take?

The program is designed for completion in three years (nine semesters) of continuous enrollment, including summers. Students take 2–3 courses per semester while working full-time.

How competitive is admission?

Cohorts are limited to 15 students. Admission is competitive and considers professional experience, academic preparation, mission alignment, and potential contribution to the cohort learning community.

Admissions Requirements

- Master's degree from a regionally accredited institution
- Minimum graduate GPA of 3.0
- Valid Texas Principal or Principal as Instructional Leader certification
- At least three years of P-12 leadership experience
- Current administrative leadership role with capacity to lead district-level change

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Lead. Research.
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Doctor of Education
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Waypoint

Meaningful improvement is rarely the result of a single leader acting alone.

The communities served by this doctoral program deserve more than isolated expertise.

They deserve networks of leaders willing to learn together, challenge assumptions, share responsibility, and pursue improvement over time.

Cohort One is the beginning of that work.

Cohort Two will build upon it.

Future cohorts will build upon both.

The journey continues.

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