ACSR Frequently Asked Questions

What at does ACSR do?
The Antioch Center for School Renewal (ACSR) is the service wing of the Department of Education at Antioch University New England. We facilitate professional learning in support of improved teaching and learning and we provide workshops, institutes, and trainings on a variety of subjects at AUNE, in schools across the country, and internationally.

How long has ACSR existed?
Twenty-five years, though our name has changed a couple of times. We were originally known as the Critical Skills Program, then as Education By Design©. In the UK and Scotland, we were known as the Critical Skills Programme.

Are you connected to other national and regional organizations?
Absolutely! Our current affiliations include Learning Forward (and its New Hampshire affiliate), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (and its New Hampshire affiliate), the Coalition of Essential Schools, and the National School Reform Faculty. In addition, we work with the New Hampshire Department of Education and Phi Lambda Theta.

Who is on the staff of ACSR?
Laura Thomas is the director of the program and does much of the workshop facilitation. ACSR also utilizes a number of experts who have particular skill sets and experiences on a range of topics. Peg Smeltz is ACSR’s business manager and is the primary contact for logistical and registration questions.

What kinds of things does ACSR do?
Besides providing long-term support for schools engaged in large-scale improvement efforts, we offer one-day workshops and longer-term institutes both at AUNE and in schools across the country. Topics include, but are not limited to:

- Social Media 101
- Classroom Facilitation
- Individualized Instructional Coaching
- Alt 4 Support for Career and Technical Educators
- Classroom Management & Instruction for Paraprofessionals
- Creating Advisories that Matter
- Engaging Students as Partners in the Redesign Process
- Creating Independent Learning Plans for Diverse Learners
- Building Lessons that Push the Envelope and Engage the Learner
- Beyond Character Education: Supporting Students’ Academic and Social Development
- Creating and Assessing Extended Learning Opportunities Bringing the Real World into the Regular Classroom
- Creating and Using Formative Assessments
What if my school needs something that isn’t on the list?
Because we are connected with a number of regional and national networks, we have access to a number of experts with diverse skill sets and backgrounds. Contact us and we’ll most likely be able to connect you with a skilled presenter on your topic.

How do I become a workshop facilitator or school coach?
Contact our office for details and requirements. We’re always looking for new faces and ideas!

How do I find out what events are being offered?
We send out monthly e-mails describing upcoming events. Contact our office to be added to either our e-mail or mailing lists. Our current program is also listed on our website. Check back frequently since we update on a monthly basis.

How do I register for something?
You can find registration for all upcoming events on our website. In the table, find the event for which you wish to register. Click on the title and scroll to the bottom of the page to find the link to the online registration form for that event. If you’re having trouble, contact our office for assistance.

How much do things cost?
While costs vary based on length of the event, number of participants, distance of travel, and longevity of the relationship between your school and ACSR, our standard rule of thumb for on-site workshops is $150 per hour plus mileage and, in some cases, lodging expenses. One day events held in Keene are typically less than $100 per participant. Contact our office or visit the registration page for details.

Can I get graduate credit for ACSR workshops and Institutes?
In some cases, though it varies by length of the workshop. Individual workshop facilitators will have registration information on the day of the workshop, if it is available. If graduate credit is available for the event, we will note that fact on the registration page of our website. Typically, special student registration for ACSR events cost $250-300.

What does my school need to do to join the Coalition of Essential Schools?
Joining CES is a very straightforward process. Visit www.essentialschools.org to learn how to become a national affiliate. Becoming a part of our regional network of schools involves registering with ACSR, participating in ACSR events when appropriate, and working within your school to make the Common Principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools a reality. Because every Essential School is different, we can help you to plan the specific activities and steps necessary to make that happen.
What does my school have to do if we join the Coalition of Essential Schools?
Being a part of the Coalition of Essential Schools is about a shared philosophy. It’s not about a set of specific instructional practices or programs that a school will do. In fact, no two Essential Schools are exactly alike. If you’re confused, we can help you figure out what will work for you, your students, and your community.

What happens during a Critical Skills Institute?
A Critical Skills Institute is truly an immersion into a Critical Skills classroom. Under the guidance and leadership of master teachers, participating educators experience all dimensions of the model firsthand.

In the Institutes, educators explore problem-based, experiential, collaborative, and standards-driven learning. Over five days, they examine how these methodologies can be successfully integrated, focusing on the role of the teacher in designing curriculum, guiding students, and assessing performance. Participants develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to build and maintain a dynamic and responsive classroom.

How do I go about scheduling a Critical Skills Institute?
Critical Skills Institutes are offered in three ways: on-site during the summer, on-site during the school year, and on an individual basis during open enrollment workshops held in July at our Keene, New Hampshire Campus. On-site Level I and 2 Institutes are typically arranged by a single school or district and are supported through the year through external coaching by our master teachers and the internal support of professional learning communities, Critical Friends Groups, or on-site study groups. We also offer Level I and 2 Institutes during the school year, utilizing the existing in-service days scheduled by the district or school and supported by additional coaching between sessions. Finally, individual educators are welcome to enroll in our Keene Level I and 2 Institutes as either a first foray into the model or as a way of catching up with colleagues in already implementing schools. Visit our events page for more information or to register. If you’re ready to arrange your own Institute, contact Laura Thomas at 603-283-2302. It’s helpful if you know the dates that you’d like your institute to run.

How do I get a transcript for my ACSR course?
Students should request their transcripts 24/7 through www.getmytranscript.com via the National Student Clearinghouse.