

INTRODUCTION

Teacher educators have made significant progress in recent years in moving more of the curriculum into the field. As a result, increasing numbers of field experiences have been integrated into teacher education programs, including observations, class field trips, tutoring programs, service as teacher aides, and professional semesters in the elementary and secondary schools. Many programs start field experiences as early as the freshman year and most colleges and universities include field experiences at least in the junior year.

Student teaching, long considered as the most extensive field experience in teacher education, has become the capstone experience of field-based programs. Since the teacher education institutions of Pennsylvania prepare many thousands of students annually for teacher certification, it is important to take consistent and coordinated steps to upgrade the quality of student teaching in the Commonwealth. These guidelines were developed to strengthen the student teaching experiences in the fourteen universities in the State System of Higher Education in Pennsylvania. They are supported by the referenced **Association Teacher Education (ATE)** document entitled, *Standards For Field Experiences in Teacher Education*, adopted by the Delegate Assembly of the Association of Teacher Education in 1999.