



**Pennsylvania
Association of
Colleges and
Teacher Educators**

*A State Unit of the
Association of Teacher
Educators and the American
Association of Colleges for
Teacher Education*

ASSURING AND SUSTAINING
EXCELLENCE IN
QUALITY TEACHER
PREPARATION





Introduction

The Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators (PAC-TE) is dedicated to providing strong advocacy for teacher education in the Commonwealth, and it does so with the conviction that every student at all levels and in all settings has the opportunity and right to learn with the most highly qualified and effective teachers possible.

Virtually all colleges and universities with teacher education programs approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) hold institutional membership in PAC-TE, and over 500 teacher educators maintain membership. Consequently, PAC-TE is the unified voice of teacher education in the Commonwealth.

Because of its deep interest and investment in all levels of learning in the Commonwealth, PAC-TE welcomes the opportunity to share its beliefs and positions with others involved in the same issues.

PAC-TE Beliefs

The core beliefs of the Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators (PAC-TE) are that

- All teacher candidates must be prepared to provide high quality educational experiences for all students.
- All teacher candidates must act as advocates for all students.
- The diversity of perspectives and institutional missions among the Commonwealth's teacher preparation institutions provides richness and diversity to the teacher education enterprise that benefits students, teachers, and schools.
- Teaching is a complex, intellectual activity that requires contextualized decision-making, problem-solving, and action based on professional knowledge and expertise.
- Standards for teacher education programs must reflect the complex nature of teaching.
- The preparation of highly qualified teachers is a complex, problem-solving activity that requires a wide variety of professional knowledge and expertise.
- Preparation programs must be provided the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to meet standards in multiple ways.
- Professional educators are involved in lifelong learning to enhance their knowledge and expertise.
- The process of developing curriculum, instructional procedures, and evaluation processes to meet state standards is a multi-year, resource-intensive process in basic education and teacher education.
- Standards selected for basic education and teacher education must be long-term, comprehensive, and developed collaboratively with PAC-TE, the State Board of Education, and PDE.
- Assessment and accountability systems must focus on student learning, teaching, and teacher education, utilizing robust evaluation procedures with evidence drawn from a wide variety of data sources.
- Higher education and basic education provide unique and important contributions to the education of teachers. Without the higher education components, programs lose the intellectual richness; without long-term, mentored clinical experiences in basic education, programs lose practitioner wisdom and expertise.
- All individuals seeking Pennsylvania teaching certification must meet the same rigorous standards for initial and ongoing certification.
- Beginning teachers must be recognized as being both teachers and learners.
- Beginning teachers must be supported, nurtured, and mentored through the first years of their careers.



The Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators (PAC-TE) espouses core beliefs that express a commitment to advancing highest quality teacher preparation programs aimed at a single goal: the opportunity and right for all learners to achieve. Stemming from PAC-TE's core beliefs are six keys to assuring and sustaining excellence in teacher preparation.

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1 Teacher Effectiveness

To promote excellence in teacher preparation, PAC-TE is dedicated to providing leadership in the development of pre-service teacher training through effective program content for the following four nationally recognized domains, developed and supported in the profession through the widely applied research of Charlotte Danielson (2010). These four domains: Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instructional Delivery, and Professionalism, constitute the core of the Pennsylvania Department of Education teacher candidate evaluation form (PA-430) and are aligned with The Five Core Propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) listed beside each domain below.

I. Planning and Preparation (NBPTS #2)

Effective teacher candidates

- Possess a deep and broad content knowledge and work to refine and hone pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions on an on-going basis.
- Are thorough in the preparation and implementation of daily lessons and design experiences that engage all students in authentic, meaningful learning.
- Continually engage in professional development activities in order to acquire and apply best practice strategies in subject area and instruction.



II. Classroom Environment (NBPTS #1)

Effective teacher candidates

- Realize the important relationship between emotional support and effective learning and strive to develop a strong rapport with their students.
- Enable, affirm, and nurture every student's potential.
- Demand high academic expectations of all students within a supportive and equitable social space.
- Are sensitive to psychological, physiological, and environmental factors that can inhibit student learning and search for solutions to learning problems that may exist beyond the classroom.

III. Instructional Delivery (NBPTS #2, 3)

Effective teacher candidates

- Identify the fundamental structures of their subjects and provide all students with the essential knowledge and skills required for immediate application and further advanced study.
- Recognize the multi-dimensional nature of each learner and apply a broad range of instructional and interdisciplinary strategies in order to meet the learning needs of all students based on the physical, emotional, and social as well as intellectual pathways to learning.
- Use technology appropriately to improve student learning and enhance classroom instruction.
- Evaluate learning through multiple genuine assessments that measure all students' capabilities across a wide range of subject knowledge and skills.

IV. Professionalism (NBPTS #4 & #5)

Effective teacher candidates

- Demonstrate personal and professional habits of mind that reflect positive attitudes and values and serve as role models and advocates for students and colleagues.
- View teaching as a collaborative profession and support team planning and teaching as a means to more fully explore best teaching strategies and increase student achievement.
- Are life-long learners who continue to uphold rigorous standards for on-going certification and who mentor other teachers, especially those new to the profession.

2 Assessment of Teacher Effectiveness

PAC-TE believes that assessments of effective teaching must

- Be designed to reflect professional expectations for supporting student learning and achievement.
- Be a collaborative activity that includes input from other teachers, administrators, parents and students.
- Provide diverse resources for planning and positive classroom learning environments.
- Value the diversity of the students, teachers, and citizenship.
- Demonstrate collaboration with other teachers, administrators, parents, and other education professionals to ensure student success.
- Rely on valid and reliable sources of data that are used in ethical and responsible ways.
- Not be limited to student standardized test scores, as these are but one measure of what students have learned.

• Take into account the continuum of teacher professional development as well as the resources and supports provided for classroom instruction within the school districts (i.e., mentoring/induction of beginning teachers, resources, community support).

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6 State Leadership

PAC-TE welcomes collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), the Pennsylvania State Board of Education, and other professional education organizations in addressing teacher preparation issues.

PAC-TE believes that

- All preparation programs, regardless of where they are based, must meet the same high approval standards as established by PDE.
- Statewide leadership in teacher education must be provided by those who have been involved in and have experience with teacher education, whether in Pennsylvania or elsewhere.
- The program approval process, including regular reviews of all approved programs, guarantees program compliance to state standards.
- When teacher certification procedures are to be reviewed or changed, PDE must work closely with the Pennsylvania State Board of Education during public hearings to gain input from informed parties before action is taken.
- PAC-TE, PDE, and the State Board of Education continuously look for improvements in the certification process.
- PAC-TE, PDE, and the State Board of Education carefully consider any proposed certification changes and submit considered judgment about such changes.



3 Program Approval

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has established a program approval process to ensure that teacher preparation programs are of high quality.

PAC-TE supports a program approval process that

- Serves as a flexible, responsive, and challenging mechanism for determining the quality of institutional teacher education programs.
- Requires all preparation programs, whether based in colleges and universities or not, traditional or alternative, to meet the same high approval standards.
- Requires all entities (in-state and out-of-state) wishing to place field students/student teachers/interns in Pennsylvania schools to meet the same Pennsylvania competencies and standards designed to address the educational needs of all students.

Furthermore, PAC-TE believes that the foundations of an effective program approval process include

- Nationally recognized professional standards that clearly define the knowledge, skills, and dispositions teacher candidates should possess as a result of their teacher preparation program;
- Peer review of evidence that the standards are achieved;
- Well-prepared reviewers who are representative of the profession of teaching including teacher educators, K-12 classroom teachers, and school administrators;
- PDE staff to act as liaisons with PAC-TE assistance in the preparation of team members and the review process.

4 Pathways to Teacher Certification

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has created regulations to safeguard the teacher quality and learning experiences of its students.

Therefore, PAC-TE believes that all pathways (alternative and traditional) to certification in Pennsylvania must

- Ensure that program quality and certification competencies will not be compromised for the purpose of delivering an accelerated program.
- Be held accountable to the same rigorous Pennsylvania standards for the preparation of teacher candidates.
- Successfully complete the same rigorous program approval process to teacher certification in Pennsylvania regardless of method of delivery.
- Demonstrate that they address all certification competencies required for teacher certification in Pennsylvania.

5 Accountability

PAC-TE believes that an accountability system for teacher preparation programs must be responsive to the needs of the candidates, the faculty, and the preparing institution. Therefore, it must

- Not be based on a single measure but must include evidence from a wide-range of sources.
- Be transparent.
- Demonstrate validity and reliability for each purpose to which it will be applied.
- Never have a predetermined number or percent of entities that will fail.
- Be constructed in such a fashion that it is possible for all preparation programs to meet high quality standards.
- Focus on the candidates' skills and knowledge as they move through a preparation program.
- Include representation from preparing institutions in the development of accountability measures.
- Be used as a signaling device, not a high-stakes evaluation instrument, to assure that candidate growth and evaluation are supportive and not punitive.



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