

STATE POLICY STATEMENTS TO ENHANCE EDUCATOR PREPARATION

In June 2016, leaders of the state chapters of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) agreed on the following state policy statements to enhance educator preparation. More than 1,100 colleges and universities are members of these chapters.

RESPECT EDUCATORS AS PROFESSIONALS

Teaching is the profession that makes every other profession possible. Nonetheless, state policy and policy makers often send messages that devalue the work of educators and the programs that prepare them. For example, some policy prioritizes prospective teachers' access to jobs over the quality of their preparation. Additionally, educator preparation professionals often are underutilized when state education policies and rules are developed. States can address these problems in ways that elevate program quality and educator readiness while also strengthening the teaching profession.

Policy Asks

- Require all teachers of record to have completed an accredited, professional preparation program.
- Hold all programs and pathways that prepare teachers to clear, consistent, and high standards, professional program reviews, and transparency expectations.
- Require all candidates who complete these programs and pathways to meet equally high expectations to enter the field.
- Consult teacher educators when policies regarding the teaching profession are being discussed, developed, and finalized.
- Include representatives of educator preparation programs in conversations related to implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act.
- Include teacher educators on state boards, task forces, committees, and hearings.

STRENGTHEN THE EDUCATOR PIPELINE

Some states are seeing dramatic decreases in the number of individuals interested in becoming teachers. This shrinking pipeline exacerbates longstanding concerns about high teacher turnover, a lack of diversity in the educator workforce, and shortages in some geographic areas and fields. States can help to create a supply of well-prepared teachers in several ways.

Policy Asks

- Support programs that help identify and encourage high school students interested in teaching, particularly students from underrepresented backgrounds.
- Create and support scholarships and loan-forgiveness programs—especially for educators who commit to work in high-need schools or teach in-demand subjects—to encourage more people to enter teaching.
- Invest in innovative models of clinical practice to better prepare new teachers who are more likely to persist in the profession.
- Take advantage of teacher educators' willingness to work with state leaders to understand local needs, to develop strategies for recruiting and retaining teachers—including professionals from other fields—and to collaborate on implementing new ideas.
- Support programs that prepare career changers to meet high standards for initial licensure.
- Address inadequate salary structures, professional development, leadership opportunities, and overall working conditions to make teaching a more attractive profession.

IMPROVE DATA SYSTEMS

Educator preparation providers want to use data on their programs to inform and improve the preparation of effective beginning teachers. However, the availability of and access to these data vary greatly by state. Some state policies require data to be reported but do not integrate them into a useful system. Further, many providers lack the resources to meet reporting requirements for state, federal, and accreditation purposes. By addressing these shortcomings, states can help educator preparation programs use data for long-term positive change while meeting reporting requirements.

Policy Asks

- Require data systems to be more accessible by educators and better integrated across agencies and jurisdictions.
- Support state agencies with adequate staffing and training to be able to collect and provide data that are useful for educator preparation program accountability and continuous improvement.
- Create a budget line to fund existing data-related reporting requirements.