



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

**AACTE 74th Annual Meeting
March 4-6, 2022, New Orleans, LA**

Rethink, Reshape, Reimagine, Revolutionize: Growing the Profession Post Pandemic

The events of 2020 challenged the field of education in dramatic and unprecedented ways. The advent of the pandemic thrust educators into uncharted territory and created a dramatically different, virtual context for teaching and learning. As the COVID-19 crisis unfolded, teachers and teacher candidates quickly adapted their instruction to incorporate multiple modes of delivery, including virtual, hybrid, and in-person instruction constrained by masks, plexiglass, and social distancing. The enormous investment of energy required to make the sudden shift, the isolation imposed by the threat of the pandemic, and the separation from colleagues tested the intellect, energy, and emotional resilience of educators. In the midst of this unforeseen and uncharted environment, a pressing challenge arose: addressing the striking inequities of access to technology and learning, clearly delineated along socioeconomic lines, which stood to further expand the achievement gap between white students and their classmates of color.

Beyond the global pandemic, the practice of teaching was further redefined through the horrendous murders and unjust deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and many other Black Americans. Educators embraced their new responsibility as front-line workers in dismantling structural racism within the American education system. Schools played a critical role in educating students about citizenship and societal values, which have long perpetuated the cycle of racial injustice. And our educator programs realized the pertinent need to incorporate curricula to educate and guide learners to value the lives of all human beings and hold others accountable in practicing justice.

Amid this turbulent climate, educator preparation programs were tasked with providing effective online instruction, securing clinical placements in schools while addressing social distancing requirements, and collaborating with state licensing agencies to ensure their candidates would and could graduate on time. But in spite of these challenges - or perhaps because of them - a new wave of educational innovation is blooming. Teachers are pioneering initiatives to engage students in virtual learning. Teacher candidates are discovering new and innovative ways to add value to their placements. Teacher educators are developing alternative ways to both supplement and complement traditional clinical experiences. Addressing the complex needs of learners requires ALL educators, including teachers, school counselors, principals, superintendents, parents, and greater community members, to engage in the education of all students. And equipped with these modernizations and realizations, education leaders are forging pathways for collaboration and advocacy to further benefit all learners.

During AACTE's 2022 Annual Meeting, we have an opportunity to reflect upon our journey through the recent events within our country and our world. We can assess the knowledge and insights gained from

this dramatically imposed and previously unimaginable context for teaching and learning. We can share the innovations we have created, learn from the exemplary work of our colleagues and peers, and find inspiration to create the next set of breakthroughs in reimagining educator preparation. Further, we can examine the processes employed to develop these innovations, the ways in which we have tackled problems collaboratively, the practices implemented in supporting faculty, colleagues, and partners, and our advancements in establishing an equitable, accessible education for all students.

In the midst of the constant challenges and rapid change, many pivotal questions remain. Where do we go from here? How do we take what has been learned and apply it, magnify it, and build upon it in a post pandemic world? How do we utilize the discoveries of our research and the successes of our programs for the betterment of both our profession and education overall? How do we recover from the damage caused by the loss of learning at critical development stages? How do we continue to address the inequities brought to light, in order to shape a more equitable and just educational system? How do we apply what has been learned to further revolutionize education to serve all learners? Join us at AACTE's 2022 Annual Meeting, as we delve into these crucial conversations to rethink, reshape, and reimagine our profession.

Strand I: Preparing Educators In and For the Future

Educator preparation sits at a crossroad of crises. Over the last decade, many higher education institutions have experienced a steady decline in enrollment due, in part, to population changes. Additionally, university-based educator preparation programs have seen significant reductions and even program closures. This enrollment decline mirrored in educator preparation is exacerbated by increasing expectations of our programs and our candidates, while funding for education continues to shrink.

The rising demand for new teachers, counselors, principals, and superintendents and shrinking production capacity in colleges and universities threatens the quality of education needed to ensure a rich quality of life for Americans and the global competitiveness of the United States. Further, shifts in society, business, and education due to unexpected and unprecedented events have forced experimentation around new ideas. The continuous rethinking and reshaping of schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic compels us to consider not only the role of all educators, but also the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for the future.

The purpose of this strand is to share innovative perspectives, orientations, strategies, and resources that protect the integrity of teacher preparation while acknowledging the need for change.

Proposals in this strand are encouraged to address one or more of the following questions:

- How are educator preparation programs responding to today's challenges and reshaping the preparation of teachers and administrators?
- In what ways can educator preparation programs address the issues of elevated capacities and increased demand while managing a shrinking support infrastructure?
- How are educator preparation programs reimagining and redefining field experiences and internships in today's current environment?
- What models are educator preparation programs using to evaluate candidates appropriately and effectively, and how will these models need to evolve?

- How can educator preparation programs both support individuals wanting to become teachers, counselors, principals, and superintendents while also collaborating with partners to increase retention from within the current teacher workforce?
- How can and must social-emotional learning be addressed in educator preparation programming, accounting for the many post-pandemic needs of students?
- What are the implications for clinical practice in virtual settings, and how can they reshape the current framework for clinical practice?
- Has the public perception of teachers and teaching changed, and how can we use those perceptions to bolster the work of our educator preparation programs?

Strand II: Renewing Democracy through Activism and Collaboration

In the wake of senseless attacks that threaten the sustainability and foundation of our democratic society, activism in PK-20 settings is creating a new model of citizenry. As such, it is essential for educational stakeholders to both promote our democratic principles and engage as activists and advocates. An activist is someone who makes an intentional action to bring about social or political change. An advocate is someone who speaks on behalf of another person or group. Both are necessary to disrupt inequities and educate for change in our schools, communities, and educator preparation programs.

Scholars, practitioners, and colleagues from the field already engage in this important work (e.g., YPAR, TRANS* youth advocacy, GLSEN, disability studies, critical race theory, 1619 Project and Abolitionist teaching). Hope and resilience is the personification of stakeholder voices at all levels, and they must be heard and attended to by educators serving as activists and advocates. In these roles, educators must promote effective and equitable practices necessary to right the wrongs and provide equity for all students. This work cannot be done in a silo; our engagement with stakeholders and across systems must be considered if we wish to transform and promote democratic education.

The purpose of this strand is to identify spaces in which activism and advocacy is taking place, explore lessons learned from this work, and forge collaborative bonds to bolster our shared, democratic principles of education.

Proposals in this strand are encouraged to address one of more of the following questions:

- How do we as activists and advocates tilt the scales of justice toward children and communities?
- In what ways can educators be informed about, and participate in, structured activism and advocacy to promote a democratic education?
- How can stakeholders develop an activist and/or advocate stance to respond to political events and ensure equity and access for all?
- What concepts of activism and advocacy can we incorporate into educator preparation while still maintaining program integrity (i.e., ensuring that our graduates attend to the academic and social emotional needs of all learners)?
- What role does culturally relevant leadership play in sustaining the activist and/or advocate?
- How do we foster interdisciplinary collaboration to promote activism and advocacy within, across, and beyond institutions and organizations?

- How can we best use our advocacy and voice in the policy arenas at the local, state, and federal levels?
- How do we empower students to participate in activism and advocacy for positive changes in their learning experiences?

Strand III: Addressing Public Concerns for the Future of the Profession

For several decades, the teaching profession has faced public scrutiny and been depicted as solely accountable for the outcomes of PK-12 learners. “Alternative facts” and unsubstantiated opinions continue to defame and slander the teaching profession, alternative pathways compromise professional standards, and alternative approaches to mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 create conflicting standards, all of which impact the teacher pipeline. Despite society commending educators for confronting the challenges of the pandemic in early 2020, today, much of that praise has manifested into concern and blame for students not returning to classrooms full-time for in-person instruction. As we emerge from this pandemic, substantial concern from both the public and the profession exists regarding how teachers will “move forward” and ensure equitable and effective instruction for the nation’s PK-12 students.

Despite past attempts to diversify the educator workforce, a comprehensive systems approach is needed to ensure retention of diverse educators as they enter settings, including educator preparation programs, that have been framed predominantly from a Euro-centric perspective. While the percentage of teachers from diverse backgrounds has increased, research indicates these teachers are more likely to leave the profession than white teachers. Thus, simply recruiting teachers from diverse backgrounds is insufficient. Efforts that sustain and affirm these teachers are necessary to the goal of diversifying the educator workforce.

The purpose of this strand is to explore practices that address the ways in which the education profession can, and is, addressing public concerns regarding the future of the profession. This strand includes a wide variety of ideas, perspectives, views, and research, and is intended to be both a reflection of the current PK-20 setting and a hopeful look into the future.

Proposals in this strand are encouraged to address one or more of the following questions:

- How will states, EPPs, and the public address closures and mergers of educator preparation institutions and the discontinuance of educator preparation programs?
- How are/will teacher preparation programs adapt to address the demographic change in the American population?
- What are successes, and attempts, to develop value models related to in-person, hybrid, and virtual preparation of our future educators?
- What strategies will be employed in establishing and sustaining a diverse teaching profession where the educators of the school/district reflect the general diverse nature of the students they are teaching?
- How will educator preparation programs adjust their practices to accommodate the unique needs of students, schools, accrediting bodies, etc., while maintaining program integrity?
- How can higher education and PK-20 educators collaborate to establish a sustainable education profession through effective recruitment, enrollment, and retention strategies?

- Which practices create the most innovative, authentic, and sustainable partnerships leading to improved retention of teachers from diverse backgrounds?
- How can higher education, school districts, and community organizations partner and collaborate to effectively address the shortage of teachers locally, regionally, and nationally?

Strand IV: Confronting the Challenges Facing our Programs and Institutions

These are indeed unprecedented times, and as the saying goes, “unprecedented times require unprecedented measures.” This phrase reverberated throughout the halls of many institutions this last year, including those of our educator preparation programs. From mandatory budget cuts to reductions in faculty and staff, from in-person teaching and learning restrictions to escalating racial tension and social injustices, our institutions and programs are facing even larger challenges now than those that existed before the global pandemic.

However, we as educators stand in a unique position to affect real and positive change. We understand the criticality of recruiting diverse, talented people into the education profession and can advocate for funding to aid colleges and universities in their recovery from the significant financial challenges caused by the pandemic. We can address the crucial state policy changes necessary to support innovative improvement in education through our research and the work of our programs. We can promote equal opportunity and fairness for all citizens and name violations when we see them. Because now more than ever, we must consider how, as a profession, we respond to challenges in ways that not only support our candidates, but also our communities and the PK-12 students they serve.

The purpose of this strand is to confront the myriad of challenges facing our institutions and programs today through the sharing of promising practices and strategies for advancement and continuous improvement.

Proposals in this strand are encouraged to address one or more of the following questions:

- How are faculty supported as they continue to assume more responsibilities with fewer resources?
- In what ways must we prepare candidates to address the learning loss stemming from the global pandemic? How can faculty address this learning loss with incoming candidates in our programs?
- What are the financial implications facing our programs and institutions as a result of the global pandemic? What innovations are allowing programs to reduce costs without sacrificing quality, courses, and faculty? What means are being utilized to address the affordability of our programs for potential and current teacher candidates?
- How are new accreditation standards impacting our programs and institutions? How are these standards being leveraged for program improvement?
- What data are critical to collect and analyze in benchmarking the successes of our programs? How can this data collection and analysis be managed with fewer staff and faculty?
- How might viewing the events of this last year from a historical perspective support the creation of promising practices impacting the future of educator preparation?
- What successful practices from this last year can be applied toward enhancing and improving efforts to increase diversity in the educator pipeline?

- How can advancements in virtual practice and instruction attained this last year be applied toward addressing the existing technology gap?

The final date for proposal submission is May 28, 2021. Acceptance notifications will be sent in August 2021. Visit submit.aacte.org to begin a proposal.