



"There can be no greater national priority than excellence in the preparation of our teachers. By serving as a learning community for community college teacher education programs, NACCTEP provides invaluable leadership to help achieve that priority."

Walter G. Bumphus, President and CEO, American Association of Community Colleges

The Crucial Role of Community Colleges in Teacher Preparation and Professional Development

Community colleges play an essential and growing role in the preparation and professional development of teachers. Accessible and affordable, with diverse student bodies that represent local populations, and established relationships with school districts and universities, community colleges are uniquely positioned to attract, prepare, and support early childhood (birth to age eight) and K-12 teacher candidates. Community colleges address teacher education needs in the following ways.

Fast Facts:

- **Forty-seven** percent of community colleges have teacher education programs; 55 percent offer early childhood/family studies programs (AACC, 2012).
- Over **40 percent** of students enrolled in community colleges are from a racial/ethnic minority group (Coulter and Vandal, 2007).
- The average age of a community college student is **29** (Coulter and Vandal, 2007).
- **Four out of ten** teachers completed at least some of their math and science courses at community colleges (Shkodriani, 2004).
- Community college undergraduate students pay an average of 36 percent less in tuition and fees than those at a public four-year institution (College Board, 2012).
- **Post-baccalaureate programs** are appealing to working adults and career changers, and responding to the nation's critical need for teachers, particularly in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) content areas (Patton, 2008).

Community colleges meet the needs of the teaching profession with:

- Two year and/or associate degree programs in elementary, secondary, early childhood, and special education
- Transfer degrees to four-year colleges and universities
- Alternative routes to certification, including post-baccalaureate certification programs
- Traditional onsite, hybrid, and online coursework
- Professional development for early childhood and K-12 educators
- Partnerships with four-year colleges and universities to offer bachelors and/or masters degrees on community college campuses
- Community college conferred baccalaureate degrees

References

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The National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs (NACCTEP) is an organization that promotes the community college role in the recruitment, preparation, retention, and renewal of diverse early childhood and K-12 teachers. NACCTEP supports institutions and individuals and serves as a voice for community colleges in national discussions about teacher education. It works to enhance current community college teacher education programs and serves as a resource for those looking to develop new programs. The organization was conceived in partnership between the Maricopa Community Colleges, the League for Innovation in the Community College, and the American Association of Community Colleges.