

VISION/MISSION

Vision

The teacher education programs at Plymouth State University strive to develop visionary educators who will take the lead in transforming education in the state, the region and the nation to better serve all students and their families. Our vision is rooted in Plymouth State's tradition of service, emphasized in the University motto, "*Ut Prosim*—That I May Serve." At the same time, we seek to anticipate and respond to changing demographics and societal expectations by reaching into communities with programs that will educate and inspire. Through collaborations with area schools and community organizations, we aim to emphasize our shared commitment to the education and well-being of all students. Above all, we endeavor to prepare competent and caring educators who exemplify the qualities of Commitment, Service, Vision and Leadership, and who, in turn, will cultivate these qualities in the students they teach.

Mission

Plymouth State carries on a long-standing commitment to serve communities, the state and the region, by preparing thoughtful, reflective educators who envision a better future for all students and willingly accept the responsibilities and challenges of leadership. Beyond the initial certification level, the University offers programs in a variety of educational specialties, which provide educational professionals with opportunities to enhance their personal and professional growth and development. The Council of Teacher Education builds on the University's mission to provide learning experiences that promote understanding and respect for all people and to foster the constructive, open-minded discourse that is so necessary in a democracy.

DIVERSITY FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHER EDUCATION AT PLYMOUTH STATE UNIVERSITY

In order to teach effectively and ensure student learning in a democratic and pluralistic society, each teacher education candidate at Plymouth State University, by the conclusion of his or her program, will have developed the ability to:

1. describe culture as a multifaceted and dynamic construct
2. critically examine his or her own sociocultural positions and understand the ways in which background and experiences shape one's view of the world
3. learn from and about students, families and communities, and draw on this knowledge to inform instruction
4. view students and families and communities, and draw on this knowledge to inform instruction
5. acquire and extend his or her own multicultural awareness by exploring and learning about the history, experiences, beliefs and values of others
6. recognize and challenge biases in him/herself and others, as well as institutional oppression in schools and throughout society
7. implement inclusive, culturally responsive teaching practices

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STATEMENT

Plymouth State University, in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, veteran's status or disability, in admission or access to, treatment of, or employment in its programs or activities. Inquiries regarding this policy should be made to the Vice President for Student Affairs at Plymouth State University. Further inquiries may also be addressed to the Director, Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20201.

CODE OF ETHICS

NEA – National Education Association

www.nea.org/code.html

Code of Ethics of the Education Profession

Preamble

The educator, believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurture of the democratic principles. Essential to these goals is the protection of freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator accepts the responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical standards.

The educator recognizes the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process. The desire for the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of the members of the community provides the incentive to attain and maintain the highest possible degree of ethical conduct. The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession indicates the aspiration of all educators and provides standards by which to judge conduct.

The remedies specified by the NEA and/or its affiliates for the violation of any provision of this Code shall be exclusive and no such provision shall be enforceable in any form other than the one specifically designated by the NEA or its affiliates.

Principle I

Commitment to the Student

The educator strives to help each student realize his or her potential as a worthy and effective member of society. The educator therefore works to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the student, the educator—

1. Shall not unreasonably restrain the student from independent action in the pursuit of learning.
2. Shall not unreasonably deny the student's access to varying points of view.
3. Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter relevant to the student's progress.
4. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.
5. Shall not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement.
6. Shall not on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, family, social or cultural background, or sexual orientation, unfairly—
 - a. Exclude any student from participation in any program
 - b. Deny benefits to any student
 - c. Grant any advantage to any student
7. Shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage.
8. Shall not disclose information about students obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.

Principle II

Commitment to the Profession

The education profession is vested by the public with a trust and responsibility requiring the highest ideals of professional service.

In the belief that the quality of the services of the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens, the educator shall exert every effort to raise professional standards, to promote a climate that encourages the exercise of professional judgment, to achieve conditions that attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education, and to assist in preventing the practice of the profession by unqualified persons.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the profession, the educator—

1. Shall not in an application for a professional position deliberately make a false statement or fail to disclose a material fact related to competency and qualifications.
2. Shall not misrepresent his/her professional qualifications.
3. Shall not assist any entry into the profession of a person known to be unqualified in respect to character, education, or other relevant attribute.
4. Shall not knowingly make a false statement concerning the qualifications of a candidate for a professional position.
5. Shall not assist a non-educator in the unauthorized practice of teaching.
6. Shall not disclose information about colleagues obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.
7. Shall not knowingly make false or malicious statements about a colleague.
8. Shall not accept any gratuity, gift, or favor that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or action.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHER EDUCATION (CHECK)

What is the conceptual framework?

The conceptual framework for teacher education at Plymouth State University is a shared set of beliefs and attitudes that serves as the foundation for each teacher education program. The framework clearly identifies for faculty, staff and students the core values that we share as a community. These core values—Commitment, Holism, Experience, Collaboration and Knowledge—are meaningfully integrated into all teacher education coursework, service learning and practice teaching experiences.

How do faculty, staff and students use the conceptual framework?

Faculty, staff and students should incorporate the conceptual framework into all aspects of their thinking, planning and assessment. The underlying assumptions of the conceptual framework should be articulated and shared in our knowledge base, skills and dispositions necessary to help all students learn.

How do students incorporate the conceptual framework in their daily work in the schools?

Students need to think about the five elements of CHECK. Clarify in your mind exactly what the elements mean. Discuss with your clinical faculty member examples of each element and construct questions that help to define the element. For example, think about collaboration. What does it mean? Now consider how you as the teacher candidate collaborate with the cooperating teacher, how does the cooperating teacher collaborate with other teachers? Parents? Principals? And Faculty?

Review the following elements of CHECK and begin to reflect on the meaning of the elements, start to look for examples in your work, your cooperating teacher, clinical faculty and administrators.

In brief, the underlying assumptions of the conceptual framework are as follows:

We define **Commitment** as dedication, perseverance, and individual and social responsibility. Our teacher candidates are committed to lifelong learning and to increasing self-knowledge. They are committed to the beliefs that all students can learn and that education has the power to transform individuals and the greater society. Our teacher candidates recognize the responsibility of educators to take a thoughtful and critical stance towards themselves and their profession.

Our **Holistic** perspective involves affirming diversity and understanding the “whole child” within the family, community and cultural context. It includes working towards an integrated curriculum and recognizing how we as educators are shaped by our own experiences and culture. This holistic perspective shapes our larger vision.

Experience allows us to put theory into practice. We provide opportunities for experiential learning that serves communities and schools so that our teacher candidates can do the same for their students. Experience also involves constantly renewing skills and knowledge within one’s discipline.

Collaboration involves working with students, families and colleagues effectively toward shared goals, showing respect and openness towards diverse perspectives, and confronting and resolving conflicts effectively and respectfully. Collaboration enhances both teaching and learning, and is an essential part of developing the capacity to lead.

Knowledge refers to understanding the theory, content, methods, materials and technologies of one’s field, and understanding child and adolescent development, learning processes and motivation as these are shaped by culture. Teaching that engages all learners combines a knowledge of students and one’s subjects within the cultural, social and institutional context.

INTERSTATE NEW TEACHER ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT CONSORTIUM (INTASC) STANDARDS AND THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY (NETS-T) STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS CORRELATION

Each principle is further discussed in terms of the knowledge, dispositions and performances it implies. These provide the basis for evaluating evidence about a candidates' achievement of the standards, thus providing guidance for both preparation and assessment.

Principles

1. **Knowledge of Subject Matter:** The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.
2. **Knowledge of Human Development and Learning:** The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.
3. **Adapting Instruction for Individual Needs:** The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.
4. **Multiple Instructional Strategies:** The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving and performance skills.
5. **Classroom Motivation and Management:** The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning and self-motivation.
6. **Communication Skills:** The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration and supportive interaction in the classroom.
7. **Instructional Planning Skills:** The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community and curriculum goals.
8. **Assessment of Student Learning:** The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social and physical development of the learner.
9. **Professional Commitment and Responsibility:** The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
10. **Partnerships:** The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following is a glossary that explains commonly used terms and other terms that you will be hearing throughout your teacher preparation program. (Please know that the definitions below include references to NCATE terminology.)

- **Who are the teacher candidates?** Individuals admitted to or enrolled in programs for the initial preparation of teachers.
- **Who are the students?** Children and youth attending K-12 schools as distinguished from teacher candidates.
- **What is a school partner?** K-12 schools that collaborate with the higher education institution in designing, developing and implementing field experiences, clinical practice, delivery of instruction and research.
- **Who are the cooperating teachers?** Licensed practitioners in K-12 schools who provide instruction, supervision, assessment and direction for student teachers during the clinical experience. These practitioners are directly responsible for mentoring the student teacher.
- **Who are the clinical faculty?** School and higher education faculty responsible for instruction, supervision and assessment of student teachers during the student teaching experience. The clinical faculty is the primary link between the school partner and the University during the student teaching experience.
- **What is a student teaching experience?** A 15 week experience that provides student teachers with an intensive and extensive culminating activity. Student teachers are immersed in the learning community and are provided opportunities to develop and demonstrate competence in the professional roles for which they are preparing.
- **How are student teachers evaluated?** A student teacher will be observed a minimum of four times by the clinical faculty. There will be a midterm and a final evaluation conducted by the clinical faculty and the cooperating teacher. There will also be a self-evaluation conducted by the student teacher. Students are graded based on department requirements.
- **What is the solo period?** A time during student teaching where the student teacher will gradually assume the responsibility for instruction. This could last for a period of one to four weeks depending on the length of the placement.
- **What is a portfolio?** An accumulation of evidence about individual proficiencies, especially in relation to explicit standards and rubrics, used in evaluation of competency as a teacher or in another professional school role. Contents might include end-of-course evaluations and tasks used for instructional or student teaching experience purposes such as projects, journals and observations by faculty, videos, comments by cooperating teachers and clinical faculty, and samples of student work. Portfolios can be electronic or hard copy versions.

- **What is certification?** The process by which a non-government agency or association grants professional recognition to an individual who has met certain predetermined qualifications specified by that agency or association.
- **What are professional standards?** Candidate knowledge, skills, and disposition set by the Specialized Professional Associations (SPA program standards) and adopted by NCATE for use in its accreditation review. Professional standards also refer to standards set by other recognized national organizations/accrediting agencies that evaluate professional education programs (e.g., the National Association of Schools of Music).
- **What are dispositions?** The values, commitments and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities, and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator's own professional growth. Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice. For example, they might include a belief that all students can learn, a vision of high and challenging standards, or a commitment to a safe and supportive learning environment.
- **What is diversity?** Differences among groups of people and individuals based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation and geographical area.
- **What is accreditation?** A process for assessing and enhancing academic and educational quality through voluntary peer review. NCATE accreditation informs the public that an institution has a professional education unit that has met state, professional and institutional standards of educational quality. The decision is rendered by NCATE when an institution's professional education unit meets NCATE's standards and requirements.
- **What is a letter of recommendation?** It is an appraisal of the student teacher's knowledge, skills and dispositions to help all students learn.
- **What is a Professional Development School (PDS)?** Professional development schools (PDSs) are innovative institutions formed through partnerships between professional education programs and P-12 schools. PDS partnerships have a four-fold mission:
 - the preparation of new teachers,
 - faculty development,
 - inquiry directed at the improvement of practice, and
 - enhanced student achievement.