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## Introduction

To ensure that all students have sufficient knowledge and skills in science and engineering for success in the 21st century, the nation must attract, prepare, and retain well-educated, effective preK-12 science teachers. The National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) considers strong, performance-based science teacher education programs and science teacher licensure standards to be essential for all science teachers, including new and recent college graduates and those entering teaching from another profession. Based upon well-defined, commonly accepted professional standards, these programs will provide a foundation upon which teachers may build throughout their professional lives.

NSTA supports teacher preparation aligned with the goals and guidance provided by *A Framework for K–12 Science Education* (NRC 2012), the *Next Generati Science Standards* (*NGSS* Lead States),

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Many issues have a profound impact on the preparation of teachers, such as teacher shortages in specific fields of science, the under-representation of women and minorities in some science teaching fields, and high rates of attrition after teachers enter the classroom. NSTA supports the creation of incentives and innovative school structures to recruit, prepare, and retain talented science teachers and science-specific teaching support for new teachers after they have been certified. NSTA also advocates for organized, long-term research upon which to develop, assess, and maintain effective teacher preparation programs and for collaboration among many institutions and individuals to ensure the success of the following declarations.

## Characteristics of Programs Preparing Teachers of Science

To prepare teachers to teach science effectively, NSTA strongly recommends that all science teacher preparation programs have a curriculum that includes substantive experiences that will enable prospective teachers to

- develop robust science knowledge and skills beyond the depth and breadth needed for teaching a curriculum based on the Next Generation Science Standards or relevant state standards at the grade levels they are preparing to teach;
- organize science instruction effectively and appropriately based on the cognitive development of students;
- construct understanding of disciplinary core ideas, crosscutting concepts, and science and engineering practices that reflect the history and nature of science, including the development of major concepts, theories, assumptions, and tender of scientific practice;

- create a learning environment that encourages inquiry through the use of the science and engineering practices;
- collaborate with a community of learners, including expert science teachers, science teacher educators, and pure and applied scientists;
- engage in meaningful laboratory and simulation activities using contemporary technology tools and experience other science teaching strategies with faculty who model effective teaching practices consistent with those expected of the prospective teachers;
- understand science-specific pedagogical knowledge grounded in contemporary scholarship and school environments;
- observe diverse learners' ideas of science and prepare teaching plans to help the students develop more meaningful understanding of science;
- implement their teaching plans, assess and reflect on the learning outcomes, and adjust their teaching to enhance their students' understanding;
- engage in data-based decision making regarding their teaching behaviors, strategies, and the selection of topics,

To promote the development of needed skills, knowledge, and attitudes, NSTA recommends that science teacher preparation programs have

- a research-based focus on developing professional knowledge and skills in science and science teaching with a curriculum and management that reflects the importance of science teaching as an essential profession with its own specialized needs and functions;
- a structure for collaboration among education, science, engineering, and mathematics departments on the science teacher education course of study to ensure that prospective teachers have a solid foundation in the relevant science knowledge and skills each will teach;
- participating faculty mindful of goals and practices in the reform of science education at all levels;
- a structure for collaboration among those in higher education who develop and deliver the teacher preparation program and those who develop and deliver the clinical experiences in the schools and in oth locations;

- sufficient laboratory, technology, curriculum, and other resources to support the most effective teaching of science at the prospective teachers' levels of teaching specialization;
- science education faculty assigned to teach science-specific pedagogy with successful science teaching experience at the levels for which they are preparing candidates to teach and who have demonstrated advanced knowledge of science and pedagogy in their fields; and
- support systems in schools that feature substantive collaborative field experiences, dedication to goals of contemporary standards such as the NGSS, and integration with academic elements of the teacher preparation program.