

*A joint statement from SHAPE America and the
National Association for Kinesiology in Higher Education*

Student Recruitment for Physical Education and Health Education Teacher Education Programs

Position

There is a pressing need to address recruitment and admission challenges for physical education and health education teacher education (PETE/HETE) programs. Many PETE/HETE programs are struggling to recruit students and this has important implications for PETE/HETE's contribution to the teacher pipeline, teaching quality, and K-12 student learning. It is clear that compared to alternative certification methods, teachers prepared in teacher education programs are better prepared and tend to stay in the profession. It is also clear that demand for physical education and health teachers is strong. Jobs are available; the recruits to fill the jobs in most states are not. Future recruits who come from accredited PETE/HETE programs help ensure a competent, high-quality teacher force delivering physical education and health education in schools.

Background

The purpose of PETE/HETE programs is to prepare teachers who for the most part will teach in K-12 schools in the United States. A recent 50-state snapshot of the U.S. showed that 42% of states have experienced a decrease in PETE/HETE programs over the past decade and 50% predicted further reductions over the next five years (SHAPE America & NAKHE Joint Task Force, 2018). The West and Midwest regions have seen and are predicted to see the greatest reductions compared to South and Northwest regions of the U.S.

The program reductions and closures are tied to fewer applications to PETE/HETE programs, and this in turn is part of a national trend of fewer applications and admissions to teacher education programs more generally. From 2008-2014 there was a 36% decline in enrollment in teacher education programs (Aragon, 2016). In some institutions the number of admissions is further impacted by high admission criteria on the ACT or SAT (Ward, 2018). The net effect nationally is that there are fewer individuals entering teacher education and this has implications for the financial viability of these programs and their ability to contribute to the supply of future physical education and health education teachers (Boyce, Lund, & O'Neil, 2014; Ward, 2018).