

Host Your Own Teach CTE Event!

Perhaps one of the most important ways that we can raise awareness of the benefits of becoming a CTE educator is to conduct effective outreach to potential teachers, including students, parents, fellow educators, community stakeholders and others. What better way to urge students to pursue a career as a CTE educator than demonstrating the possibilities in an interactive way?

Hosting your own event to support recruitment of future CTE educators is an effective way to boost understanding and awareness of the issue within your entire community. By hosting a Teach CTE event, all stakeholders can work together to recruit students into the CTE education profession. Regardless of the type of event you are planning, here are some general tips:

1. IDENTIFY PLANNING PARTNERS

Events of this scale will require multiple individuals working together to bring all pieces of the event to fruition. Ideally, you should establish a planning committee to make the planning process as seamless as possible and convene this committee on a regular basis to keep the timeline moving and ensure good communication. Depending on the type and scale of the event, you may want to include:

- i. State and/or local CTE administrators and educators
- ii. State and local CTSO leaders
- iii. State ACTE association leadership
- iv. Faculty representatives of educator preparation programs
- v. Students

2. CHOOSE THE TYPE OF EVENT

You have a lot of flexibility to choose the type of event that best fits your needs. There are a variety of ways to showcase CTE teaching to attendees, but three of the most common for CTE educator recruitment are:

- **“Signing day” event:** Signing days are events where students sign a letter of intent to announce their decision to enroll in a CTE educator preparation program in front of friends, family and community members.

TEACH CTE

PRIDE IN OUR PROFESSION

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Tips for a signing day event:

- Think of this almost like a sports-related signing event. Provide a table at the event with a school tablecloth, promotional banners, etc.
 - Have students wear the gear of their future institution as they sign their letters.
 - Have a “big reveal” where the students put on caps or T-shirts of their institutions.
 - Make it fun – bring mascots, toys, etc.!
- “Showcase” Type event: These are events where attendees rotate around the event space and visit different interactive booths, typically on location at an educator preparation program

Tips for a “Showcase”-style event:

- Have program representatives and stakeholders set up across an open space, where attendees can interact with them one-on-one.
 - Encourage attendees to move around the room and interact with everyone present.
 - Have examples of student work and student ambassadors available to answer questions, etc.
 - Have light refreshments available.
- Legislative-focused events: These events are coordinated around a specific advocacy agenda, such as increasing teacher pay or changing licensure requirements.

Tips for a legislative focused event:


- Ensure the body is in session during the event time.
- Follow all security and booking procedures for the space you will be in.
- Work with your planning team to determine an advocacy agenda for the event and distribute it to those who will be attending.
- Request meetings with policymakers as soon as you can confirm the event date and time.

3. CONSIDER LOCATIONS

Determine the best location for the event, based off the type of event you choose and any additional factors as circumstance arise. Consider some of the following questions:

- Where will there be enough space to accommodate all potential attendees?
- Can attendees easily access the space or campus?
- Can the location accommodate the style of event that you want to host?

Also think about locations of educator preparation programs in your state, and how accessible any site might be:

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- Are they located near population centers?
 - Are they located near popular areas for any large industries in your state?
 - How accessible are they for public transportation, vehicle transportation and/or walking access?
 - Where would the student attendees come from?
 - How would you transport students to the site location?

Make sure to get any necessary permissions for the site you choose!

4. DETERMINE GOALS

- What impression do you want potential CTE educators to have of your event?
- How many students do you want to attend?
- What follow up activities would you like to do?
- What does a successful event look like?

5. DEVELOP A DRAFT AGENDA

- Include information about date, time, location and how to access the site.
- Add the amount of time that each piece of the event is planned to take.
- Depending on the type of event, try to vary the activities included, such as campus tours, presentations by various stakeholders in attendance, designated photo opportunities, lunch, panels, etc.

6. INVITE OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

- Depending on the nature of your event, you may want to invite:
 - i. Representatives of educator preparation programs in your state/region.
 - ii. State ACTE association leadership and members
 - iii. State CTE agency staff/state director
 - iv. CTE program specialists in your state
 - v. CTSO leadership
 - vi. Local students
 - vii. Pre-service teachers
 - viii. Career counselors/school counselors
 - ix. Business and industry partners
 - x. Members of the media
 - xi. Local, state and federal policymakers
- Begin the invitation process well before the event to ensure as much notice as possible for all invitees. Note: policymakers do not typically make scheduling decisions several months out – you will need to invite them with 2-3 weeks' notice.
- Draft an invitation with all logistical information and a preview of the agenda.
- Distribute it to your invitees at least two months in advance.

- Compile a list of all confirmed invitees as you receive them.

7. DETERMINE MEDIA ACTIVITIES


- Develop a media list by calling or visiting the websites of the newspapers, television and radio stations in your community and inquiring about the reporters who cover the education “beat.” Perform Google searches for keywords, such as your location plus “education reporter.”
- Draft a media advisory and send it to your media list two weeks before the event.
- Resend it to your list one week in advance. You can find more tips for engaging with the media in ACTE’s Advocacy Toolkit at https://www.acteonline.org/media-community-outreach_trashed/targeting-the-media/.
- Conduct individual follow-up with a small group of local media members one week before.
- If you are unable to have the media present during the tour, send the local reporters on your media list a follow-up summary and a few photographs for their use.

8. PROMOTE THE EVENT

- Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are the social media platforms most conducive to sharing content like press releases and promotional graphics. Tag members of the media and other potential attendees on social media to invite them to your event.
- In addition to traditional media and social media promotion, do not overlook these important sources:
 - i. Television stations that feature public affairs programs, one-on-one interview shows and public affairs content
 - ii. Public television stations and community cable stations
 - iii. Radio, including news stations, radio talk shows and public affairs programming
 - iv. Community newspapers
- Digital media formats such as podcasts, online news shows, YouTube channels and subscription-based email newsletters can also be utilized.

9. CONDUCT THE EVENT

- On the day of the event, have plenty of volunteers ready to greet and direct guests to provide a positive atmosphere.
- Have printed copies of the day’s agenda available for guests.
- Ensure any food, A/V resources, etc. are accounted for.
- Ensure all speakers are prepared and any VIP guests’ arrivals are confirmed.
- Take plenty of photos! Make sure that you have permission/waivers on file for students that are being photographed.

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- Have promotional items such as Teach CTE flyers, small items (e.g., pens, postcards) and links to promotional graphics available.

10. FOLLOW UP

- Send thank you letters to attendees as soon as possible.
- If you are active on social media, post photos and a recap of the event.
- Include copies of and links to any press coverage in your communications about the event.
- Include photos of the event featuring students, educators and supporters to remind them how important a robust CTE educator pipeline is to your community.
- Send out a survey to attendees with several questions:
 - (a) After today, do you feel like you have a better understanding of the education profession and the benefits of becoming a CTE educator?
 - (b) Would you recommend this event to others?
 - (c) Are you more likely to pursue a career in education?