



For over 25 years, TARIAT has been a hallmark NAU College of Education experience, empowering future teachers through mentorship, professional learning, and direct engagement with Arizona's most accomplished educators.

TARIAT was envisioned by Jim Manley, the 2000 Arizona Teacher of the Year, as a way to provide *future educators* with access to classroom best practices and accomplished teacher leaders.

In March 2026, the NAU College of Education celebrated the **25th Annual TARIAT Conference**, marking a quarter-century of inspiring and preparing the next generation of educators.

TARIAT is a collaboration of the College of Education and The AZK12 Center



How the idea was born

In 2024 I brought my high school daughter to Tariat because she was interested in being a teacher and attending NAU.

We went together again her freshman year at NAU

In her sophomore year I volunteered to be on the planning committee because I figured I might as well since I would be there again

I suggested that we do something so all high school seniors like Meg could be a part of this great experience

Others on the committee agreed, a subcommittee was formed, and the rest is history! (we will now tell you about!)

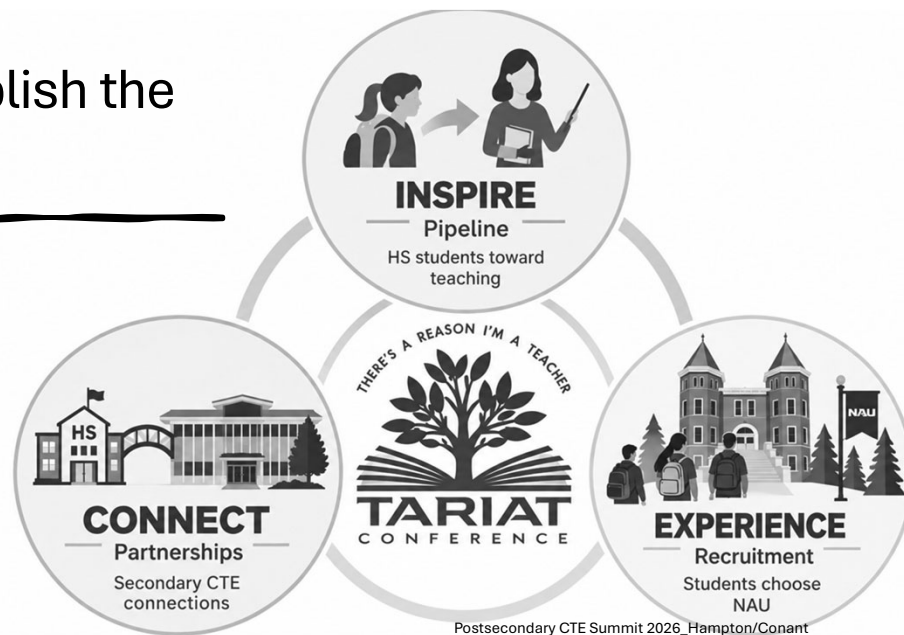


The Story: Big Picture

A conference within in a conference was planned, implemented and was a success

AU has 35 high schools in Arizona with Education Professions programs. Year one served 7 schools with 64 students. The model is designed to scale, with planning already underway to expand participation in year two.

Establish the Why



What was our WHY?

To Inspire - we did this because we wanted to encourage the pipeline from HS to College in the field of education

To Connect - partnerships - this is a core component of our COE. We have strong partnerships with many schools but more in the elementary realm. We wanted to establish partnerships with secondary CTE programs to expand our reach

To Experience - we also wanted to recruit students directly to NAU (they have lots of choices, so getting them on campus to fall in love with NAU, our college, our faculty and students



What could be a
host event?

**Program
Showcase**

**Student
Conference**

**Skills
Competition**

Career Fair

Industry Day

**Research
Symposium**

Let's start planning

What are we trying to do, for whom, and in what form?



Initial Guiding Questions

WHY this event?

WHO could be invited?

WHAT support structures are already in place?

WHAT CHALLENGES might exist?

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Our answers:

Because it already existed and was a success

HS CTE students in education pathways

The event itself already had structure; we had support of our Dean and K-12 Center; we had a core group of faculty that were willing to take this on Space. Timing. And If we build it will they come?



Target Audience



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Identify and possibly narrow (we considered both ed professions and early childhood programs but settled on just ed professions for first year)
How do you get contact info? (this was a challenge for us)

Learn more about
the target
audience



Gather input

ASK BEFORE YOU DESIGN.

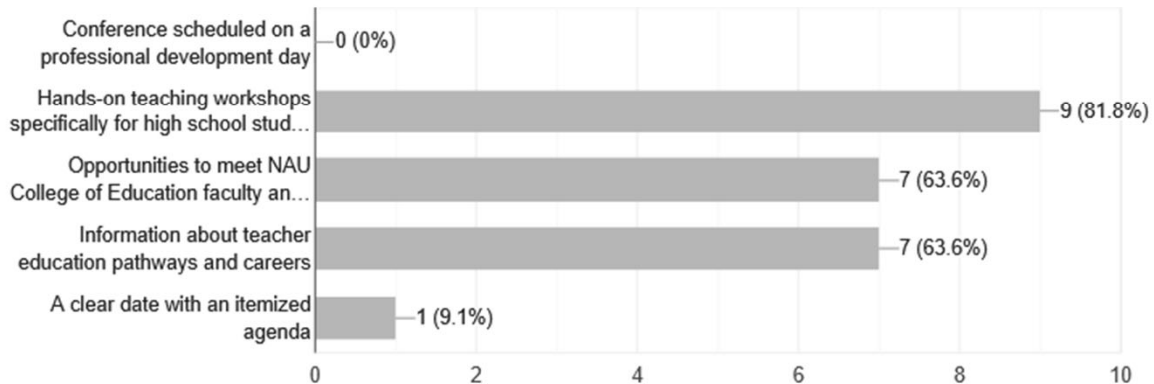
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We had identified our target audience
But needed to learn more about them
Develop and deploy survey – we had to have a general idea of what we wanted to do
before we could deploy the survey

Which of the following would most influence your decision to attend? (Select all that apply)



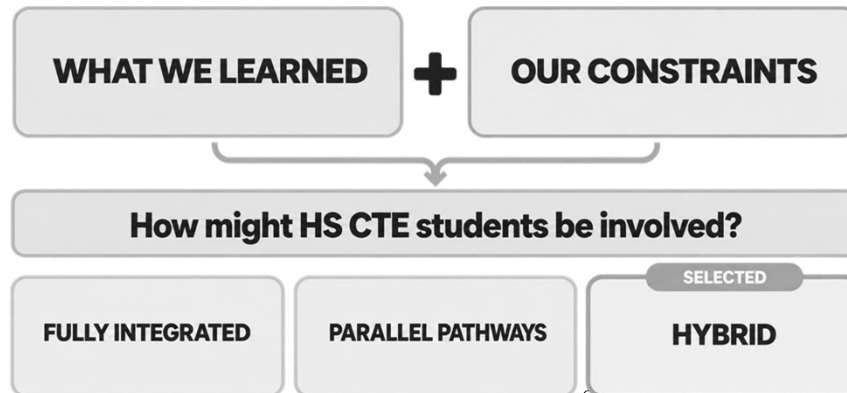
11 responses



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The survey also helped us estimate the size and makeup of our potential audience. Most teachers anticipated bringing between 6 and 20 students the students represented all four high-school grade levels, with 11th grade most heavily represented. That gave us some basic parameters for planning. But the most useful question was what would actually influence their decision to attend.”

Choose the Format



WHAT WE LEARNED

Hands-on 82% · Connections 64% · Career pathways 64

+

OUR CONSTRAINTS

Space · Existing conference structure

Then underneath, a simple question:

How might HS CTE students participate?

“We combined what teachers told us with the realities of the existing conference, particularly our space limitations, and brainstormed three ways high-school CTE students might participate. They could be fully integrated into the existing conference, have a separate parallel pathway, or we could use a hybrid of the two.”

TARIAT-CTE Model: Year One



01 Shared Signature Experiences

02 Parallel Learner Tracks

03 College Exploration

04 Intentional Networking

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4 components:

Component 1 same for both groups

Component 2 similar but parallel breakout sessions

Component 3 Unique to our high school students and teachers

Component 4 intentional networking for both the hs students and their teachers

Shared Signature Experiences



Opening Keynote



TIFFANIE JASEPH

2026 Arizona
Teacher of the Year

Closing Keynote



ASHLIE CROSSON

2025 National
Teacher of the Year

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Some aspects the same for both groups (key note speakers – all together)

The "Why"...

1. Hook
2. Belonging
2. Tap into excitement and motivation
3. Create networking opportunities



Parallel Learner Tracks

TARIAT Participants	High School CTE Students
Arizona Ambassadors of Excellence	NAU Education Faculty
Diverse professional topics	Diverse education disciplines
Choice of breakout sessions	Choice of hands-on centers
Sessions across classrooms	Centers concentrated in 2 rooms

Some aspects were similar, but parallel: breakout sessions

Survey: 82% wanted hands-on teaching workshops specifically for HS students

What we did: Created HS breakout experiences based on survey results

NAU students: Breakout sessions led by Arizona Ambassadors of Excellence

HS CTE students: Hands-on “centers” led by NAU COE faculty

Selected faculty representing diverse education areas

Why it matters: NAU students already have access to and relationships with faculty

HS students needed opportunities to **connect directly with NAU COE faculty**

Different experiences, intentionally designed for each audience

College Exploration



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Some aspects were completely different from the existing TARIAT experience

What we did

- Campus tour
- Information about teacher education majors and pathways
- Information about attending NAU
- Admissions and student services
- Financial aid and scholarships

Collaborated with multiple NAU/College departments and offices

Survey connection: Teachers identified college/career pathway information as an important factor

Why it matters

- Make the pathway from HS CTE → college → teaching visible
- Help students understand their options
- Address practical barriers/questions about attending college
- Support informed decision-making and transition planning

Intentional Networking



HS CTE Students → NAU Student Ambassadors

2–3 HS students per ambassador

Lunch together

*Real connections.
Lasting impact.*

HS CTE TEACHERS



NAU COE FACULTY

Lunch together

Networking intentionally built into the day

HS CTE students + NAU Student Ambassadors

- Faculty helped identify strong student leaders
- Recruited current NAU students as ambassadors
- Pre-assigned small groups: 2–3 HS students per ambassador
- Ambassadors left second breakout early to meet their groups
- Signs helped students find their ambassador
- Walked to the Union, got lunch, ate together
- Casual, informal conversation

HS CTE teachers + NAU COE faculty

- Faculty who facilitated centers ate with HS teachers/advisors
- Opportunity for informal conversation and relationship-building

Why it matters

- Create the conditions for informal connection
- HS students connect with current college students
- HS teachers connect with COE faculty
- Real connections, lasting impact

Event Preparation



**Pre-Registration
& Final
Registration**



**Transportation
& Parking**



Swag



Lunch



**Conference
Materials**

These deal more with **conference/event planning concerns**

Two-stage registration process

- Pre-registration: letter of support + estimated attendance

- Final registration: student/advisor names

Registration also captured transportation needs

- Vehicle type + number

- Cars, vans, minibuses, full-size buses

Plan parking around transportation information

Determine lunch process/counts

Determine swag

Create and organize conference materials

- Agendas

- Name tags

- Lanyards

- Drawstring backpacks

HS check-in organized **by school**, not individually

Advisor received one bundled set of materials for the entire school

Program Coordination



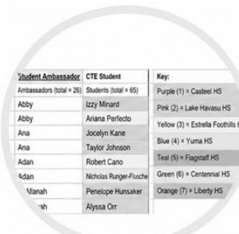
Faculty
(Workshops/Centers)



Student Ambassadors



Campus Tour



Student Grouping



Name Tags & Group Assignments

These are the **program-specific pieces** that needed to be coordinated before the event.

Faculty

- Recruit faculty from across education disciplines
- Develop/facilitate the hands-on centers
- Coordinate content, materials, space, and timing

Student Ambassadors

- Faculty helped identify strong student leaders
- Recruit ambassadors and communicate their role
- Assign **2–3 CTE students to each ambassador**

Campus Tour

- Coordinate route and timing
- Organize tour groups **by school**

Student Grouping

- Create ambassador/student matches in advance
- Color-code students **by school**
- Use the same grouping system across activities

Name Tags

- Include each student's **assigned ambassador**
- Color-code by school
- Schedule includes a specific time for ambassadors and CTE students to find each

other

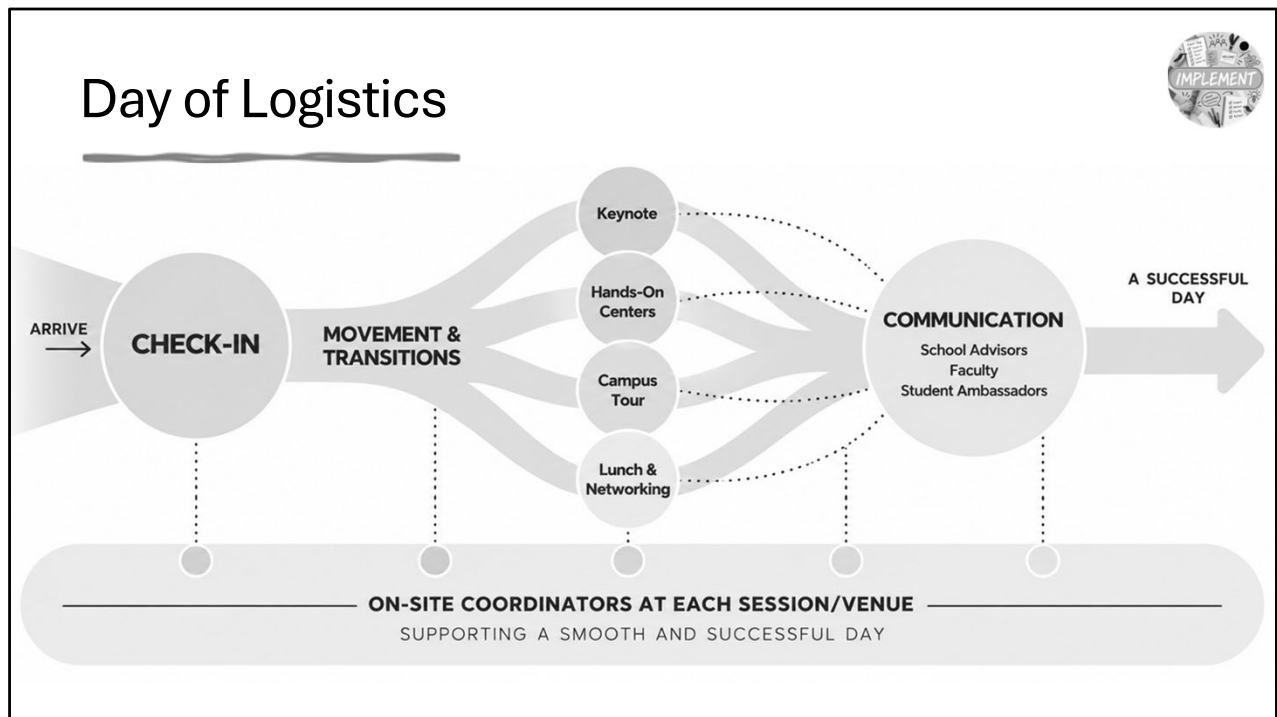
Color coding makes school/tour groups easy to identify

Communication

Communicate roles, expectations, schedules, and logistics in advance

Sample emails and communication templates we used are available in the **conference portal**

Key idea: We tried to make the organizational system visible to participants so they didn't have to figure out **where they belonged or who they were supposed to find.**



These deal with more content what/how are you executing your plan concerns

Check-In

- School-based check-in rather than individual student check-in
- Advisor receives the group's prepared materials
- Coordinate arrivals and parking, including buses/vans
- Handle last-minute attendance changes

Movement & Transitions

- Agenda tells participants where and when
- Name tags reinforce school/group/ambassador information
- Signage helps participants navigate
- Have people positioned to direct groups during transitions
- Especially important when HS students and the existing conference move into different activities

Day-of Communication

- Establish a way to quickly reach the people involved
- School advisors
- Faculty
- Student ambassadors
- Communicate schedule changes, missing students, late arrivals, questions, etc.

On-Site Coordinators

Designate a coordinator for **each session/venue**

Coordinator is physically present and knows what should be happening there

Handles timing, questions, transitions, materials, and unexpected issues

Prevents every problem from having to come back to one central person

Replication point: Advance planning creates the structure, but day-of implementation requires **people in the right places with clear ways to communicate.**



What we feel were critical components to success

PRE-REGISTRATION

Interest $\neq$ Attendance

COMMUNICATION

Communication,
Communication,
Communication!

Pre-registration

Our initial survey told us there was interest

But **interest does not equal attendance**

No cost to schools, but they still had to arrange transportation and manage all of the logistics of a field trip

Some traveled **314, 207, and 165 miles** for an event that started at 8:00 a.m.

Pre-registration included a letter of administrative support

Helped us know which interested schools had the support and resources to actually attend

Reduced uncertainty and gave us more reliable numbers for planning

Communication, communication, communication!

Things changed right up until the event

Student ambassador canceled the week of → time to adjust

Two ambassadors canceled morning of → still time to adjust

Two faculty dropped out the week of

One faculty member became available the day before

When we knew, **we could pivot**

Communication also mattered **among ourselves**

I tried to cover parking and registration → discovered groups had already parked before reaching registration

Student needed a lunch ticket → found a faculty coordinator, but the tickets were with me at another location

Reinforced the need for communication across people and locations

You can't eliminate change. Communication gives you time to respond.



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Scale
Budget
Partnerships
Transportation
Staffing
Admin Support (sell your vision)
Funding (community support solution or sponsor)