

Success at the Educator Job Fair

One of the best ways to begin your job search in any profession is by attending a job fair. At first, this may seem like a daunting task if you have never attended one before. The key to this experience is to think about how you can showcase your talents and experiences to prove yourself as a confident, passionate, and a qualified future teacher. With some preparation and organization, attending a job fair will be a very positive experience!

Before The Fair - The days leading up to the job fair, your nerves are starting to kick in. The best way to handle this stress is to plan ahead. There is no such thing as being too prepared for the fair.

[] RESEARCH

Start with researching which districts will be attending the job fair. It could be overwhelming to walk into a room full of districts and not know who is there. While researching, create a list of five districts that you are most interested in. Remember, there will be a lot of competition for people to meet with districts and there is very limited time, therefore it is important to have a priority list. Do your best to make it to your top five, but stay open to the possibility of other districts. You never know what you'll learn by talking to a variety of districts.

[] QUESTIONS

Brainstorm a few questions to ask each district you visit. Not only will you seem more interested in the district, but it could also give you more insight if you could see yourself working for this district or not. Have these written down in your notes, stored in your padfolio, so you can review them in between conversations; also take notes on the administrator's responses.

[] RESUME

Before attending the job fair you should print out multiple copies of your resume. Visit our website for additional examples of resumes with formatting suggestions and guidelines (www.careers.uiowa.edu/teachers). Make sure the resume is clear and focused on your teaching experience so districts can have a good overview about who you are as a potential employee. Remember to print your resume on resume paper and to bring 5-10 extra than what you think you will need just in case districts want more than one copy.

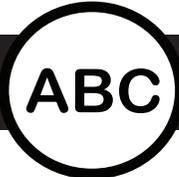
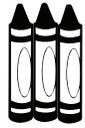
[] PITCH

Having a 60 second pitch is crucial for these fast paced meet and greets. Since time is limited, you want to be able to advocate for yourself as a future teacher in the best way possible. Practice your 60 second pitch many times before the day of the job fair. A tip guide creating a 60 second pitch can be found on our website.

[] DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Make sure you have a professional outfit to wear to the job fair. The term job fair may seem like a casual occasion, but in reality it is very much like having a series of mini interviews, business attire is appropriate and a must! You should also plan on bringing a padfolio and pen to take notes during and after your conversations with each district.

During The Fair - Make sure you plan to arrive at the job fair early. This will give you a chance to scope out the room and make sure you understand how the layout of the job fair works. District representatives will notice people who seem to be wandering the room looking confused.

ABC

During The Fair cont. - Feel free to take a lap around the fair, then come back out to the student reception area to gather your thoughts and materials, and then go back in with confidence to approach the district in a confident and professional way.

[] LOCATION

Be sure to keep an eye out for where your top five districts are located. This way you can watch your time and make sure you visit with those specific districts that appealed to you the most. However, do not stand in line for 30 minutes if it means you'll miss the opportunity to speak to other districts.

[] WAIT TIME

While waiting in line to meet with a district it is important to remember to respectfully keep your distance from the person who is currently talking with them. During your wait time it would be good to review your 60 second pitch so you can confidently present yourself.

[] MEETING A DISTRICT

When you finally have your chance to talk to a district representative, start your greeting with a firm handshake while looking them in the eye and introduce yourself. The districts will remember who was confident, made eye contact, spoke clearly, and maintained a positive overall presence. Make sure to offer them a copy of your resume and demonstrate you've done your research by working your knowledge of their district into the conversation.

After The Fair - Once you finish talking with a district, ask for a business card from the district representative. This way, you can keep a record of who you talked to while at the job fair and you will have a way to contact districts you met with at a later time.

[] NOTES

After you meet with each individual district, take a few notes about what your conversation was like. You will want to remember for the future how you felt about each district and any specific conversation notes that you could find valuable when following up after the fair.

[] THANK-YOU CARDS

Once you leave the job fair it is important to thank those districts that you spoke with. You want them to know you appreciate their time and that you hope to speak with them again in the future. An e-mail will work – especially if a district has current positions posted, but a hand written note is greatly appreciated and a nice touch. Use their contact information (that you collected during your time with them) to send these follow up messages.

Attending a job fair is not easy, especially for the first time. It is okay if not every interaction you had felt perfect and successful. This is a learning experience. The best thing about job fairs is that you get to start with a clean slate at every district. It is important that you take time to reflect on your experience and take note of what did and did not work well for you. Reflecting on these things will help you better prepare for upcoming interviews.

