



FOR THE TEACHING TIPS

For Successful Job Interviewing

If you're looking to make a career change or seek out areas for professional growth, visiting a job fair — either in-person or virtually — is a great opportunity to make a positive first impression on potential employers. Let the CALIFORNIA CENTER ON TEACHING CAREERS' experts help you make a great first impression and ensure your resume doesn't get buried on someone's desk!

1. DO YOUR RESEARCH: VISIT A CAREER CENTER

Pursuing a new job can be daunting. Fortunately, there are many (often free!) resources available online. Career centers at local colleges or universities usually provide writing guides, templates, and other materials that can strengthen your application.

2. BE CURIOUS: CONDUCT INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Get to know the scene. What's it like to work in the profession or at that school? Scheduling a short chat with an insider might give you tips on how to navigate entry to the field. It might even yield information about a job opportunity that is not yet posted.

3. BE PROACTIVE: SEND LETTERS OF INTEREST

Introduce yourself! There's no harm in sending out a letter that lets an employer know you are interested in being a part of the team. Like the informational interview, an employer might be thinking about posting a new position or opportunity that's not yet public. Your letter might pique interest and showcase initiative to a potential hiring manager.

4. CONNECT YOUR OWN CAREER DOTS: REFINE YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

Be your own best advocate. The interview is your big moment to shine. What makes you, uniquely YOU? What sets you apart from others, what's your current job, and why should a school or district choose you? Keep your pitch short – think: less than 30 seconds – so that you can rattle it off to anyone, even in an elevator!

5. PACKAGE YOUR PROFESSIONAL STORY: PERFECT YOUR RESUME AND COVER LETTER

Scan your resume (ideally one page) with fresh eyes and spell check. Does each bulleted entry start with a verb and allow for a sense of your job duties without an in-depth read? Does it describe actionable, quantifiable results? Are you using present-tense for current roles and past-tense for prior ones? Is your formatting clear and consistent? List your educational background and any extra professional development courses. Ask a trusted friend to review and provide tips, or better yet, work with advisors at the local career center for additional pointers.

Develop a one-page cover letter that highlights your skills, qualifications, career goals, and availability. This is your opportunity to succinctly encourage the employer to take their time reading your resume and contact you for an interview.

6. PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT: PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW

Research the district, school, and community, and think of questions you might ask in the interview. Think of potential questions they might ask you and be prepared with substantive, professional responses. Use the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) method when answering.

7. BE PROFESSIONAL: CONVEY YOUR BEST SELF DURING THE INTERVIEW

Dress professionally and smile! Even if your interaction is virtual, there is a person on the other side of the screen. Use open and inviting body language, and be yourself. Interviews can be nerve-wracking, but this is an opportunity for you to also understand the job and school culture as much as it's an opportunity to shine.

8. BE A GOOD LISTENER: STAY FOCUSED

Remain focused throughout the interview on questions asked and topics discussed, and be prepared to offer thoughtful, pointed answers. If you missed a question, kindly ask the interviewer to repeat it. Keep your answers on-topic and as detailed-yet-succinct as possible.

9. FOLLOW THROUGH: SEND A THANK YOU NOTE

Continue to showcase your professionalism throughout each step of the process. Sending a thank you note or email to your interviewer will signal you valued their time and the connection made during the conversation. Again, you want to stand apart from other candidates – with all things being equal, this might nudge the hiring manager towards your candidacy.

10. EXIT GRACEFULLY: REMAIN PROFESSIONAL

Provide your current employer at least two (2) week's notice and don't burn any professional bridges before you move on. Providing your current manager ample time will soften the blow of your departure and allow for any transition hiring or training to take place. Communities are also smaller than you think, so even if you didn't like certain things about your past employer, avoid talking about it publicly with your new colleagues. Professionalism and tact will keep you in the clear if your paths cross with former colleagues in the future.

Contact the CALIFORNIA CENTER ON TEACHING CAREERS at CaliforniaTeach.org for more resources and connection opportunities. Now, go chase down that teaching job of your dreams! Good luck!

CALIFORNIA CENTER ON TEACHING CAREERS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: *Marvin Lopez, M.B.A., M.S.M., marvinl@tcoe.org*

QUESTIONS: recruitment@tcoe.org

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