

Education Career Fair Tips

Make the most of this unique opportunity to meet and interact with potential employers. At the very least, teacher fairs offer important opportunities to network, research districts, submit your résumé, and pick up applications. Many schools will be screening for good candidates. Be prepared for this and leave behind a favorable impression of you!

AT THE FAIR:

- 1. Plan your Approach** – Visit first the employer(s) in which you have the strongest interest (your “A” list), then visit with employers whose districts look like possibilities. But, **don’t be afraid to modify your plan** on fair day – talk to as many districts as possible. **Visit the short lines first!** You don’t want to spend the whole fair waiting in lines.
- 2. Look Professional** – First impressions do count! Every contact with a prospective employer is a mini-interview. Regardless of what you might wear while you are teaching, show up at the interview in professional dress.
- 3. Be Assertive** – Walk directly up to a recruiter, greet with a smile, offer a firm handshake, and introduce yourself. Draft a *30-60 second personal introduction* and practice it over and over. This introduction should include: your name, teaching field, teaching objective, your knowledge of the school district, teaching experience, etc. Practice your introduction with a friend or career counselor, or in front of a mirror. Smile and make eye contact! Even if you know that the school may not be interviewing for your teaching field, take a chance and talk to them anyway -- they may be impressed enough to interview you despite what their expected needs are.
- 4. Ask for a Follow-Up** – Before you leave a recruiter, ask them about the specifics of their hiring process and how you can advance your candidacy. Ask for a business card. Shake their hands, and thank them for their time. Assert your interest!
- 5. Items to Bring with You:**
 - Pens and paper (for taking notes – jot down notes on business cards or district literature to help you remember what you learn)
 - List of target schools
 - Résumés (Bring lots of copies – more than you think you will need!)
 - A lightweight file to hold applications, résumés, business cards, school district literature, etc.
- 6. Items to Leave at Home** (or in the Holmes seats leading to the floor):
 - Bulky backpacks – you don’t want to look like a student
 - Cell phones – you may use to research schools, but make phone calls outside the interview area
 - Portfolios – save these for the follow-up interview; recruiters are short on time at the fair
 - Chewing gum

AFTER THE FAIR:

- 1. Follow-Up** – Contact the recruiters highest on your list and thank them for their time. Write a thank you note or letter to remind them of your interest and desire for an interview. Letters offer another chance for you to outline what you know about the school, your qualifications, and why you wish to teach in their district. Include details that will help them remember you.
- 2. Expand Your World** – Remember that not every school attends fairs, and some do not bring enough recruiters to speak with all qualified candidates. Submit applications to individual districts that you were not able to talk with at the fair.

Other Points to Remember

- Don’t travel in packs. Employers want to talk to you, not you and your friends.
- When you find you are second in line, maintain a 2 or 3 step distance behind the person who currently has the employer’s attention.
- Be confident and smile!
- Maintain a positive attitude!