

Career Fair Preparation Tips for Educators

Spring Career Fair, Thursday, April 23, 2015, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Student Union Ballroom

NMHU Career Services Center, Felix Martinez Building, Room 230, 454-3048, email: careerservices@nmhu.edu

BEFORE THE FAIR

- Refer to Fairs/Events on the NMHU Career Services webpage, www.nmhu.edu/careerservices to obtain an updated list of participating schools and agencies (*available by March 23*) - determine which ones you are most interested. Research these organizations through their websites. Download any applications to complete and have them ready for the fair.
 - Polish up your résumé and make an appropriate amount of copies (at least 2 per employer). Place copies in an organizer/padfolio along with a pen and paper for taking any notes during the event.
 - Prepare and practice your 1-2 minute “commercial” to pitch to employers – that is, *Introduce yourself, demonstrate your knowledge of the school, its mission and goals, express why you are interested in that school, relate your background to what you may know about the employer’s needs.*
 - Anticipate and rehearse your responses to potential interview questions.
 - Plan to dress professionally – **dress for the interview, not the job**. Avoid trendy clothing, accessories & hairstyles. Be neat and clean.
 - Prepare some questions to ask the recruiters/interviewers, such as:
 - *What are you most proud of about your school?*
 - *What are the key skills and teacher qualities most desirable by your school?*
 - *What are your school’s goals for this year? How about in the next 5 years?*
 - *Does your school offer a mentoring program for new teachers?*
 - *How do teachers collaborate in your school?*
- Note: Don’t ask any questions that can be easily found on the school’s website. Do not ask about salary or benefits at this point, unless the employer brings this topic up.

DURING THE FAIR

- Arrive early. Be there when recruiters are fresh and attentive. Arrive before the majority of other students get there.
- Take time to target schools that interest you. Also, keep an open mind and consider other schools you are not familiar with – there may be great hidden opportunities. If a booth table is less crowded, you will have more time to converse with the representative.
- Be patient and anticipate crowds and lines. Try visiting the tables with fewer crowds first.
- Scan employer handouts. Instead of just getting in line, approach the table from the side to quickly pick up materials to review. Step back far enough to be able to listen to and observe recruiters speaking to other students. Determine if your two-minute commercial needs to be adjusted.
- Take initiative and introduce yourself with a smile and a firm handshake.
- Give your 1-2 minute commercial. Give your resume to the representative. Ask questions from the list you prepared. Ask about the application process, if they will be conducting on the spot interviews, and any follow up procedures.
- Get a business card or contact information from every person you meet. Write any interesting facts, notes, or additional contact names on the back of the card. Use this information to follow up.

- Many employers may have “freebies”, such as pens, candy, and toys. Be courteous and cautious when taking these items. If you take any candy or gum, save it for later.
- Don’t play with stress balls or other toys during the fair. Avoid taking every free item you see. It is noticeable by recruiters and staff when a student seems to be attending the fair just for the free items.
- If you are an international student, don’t say that you need a job to stay in the U.S. Address the employer professionally and connect your skills to the employer’s needs.
- Complete and return any student surveys. Your comments are useful for improving future events.
- Employment Offers: Not all schools are prepared to make offers during the fair, but it is certainly possible. It is quite acceptable to request time to consider their offer.

AFTER THE FAIR

- Keep track of the schools and individuals you meet.
- Write a **thank you** note/letter to the representative you met. Include a more targeted résumé, application, and if requested, any additional information (i.e. transcripts, references).
- Contact the school within two weeks to determine that your application materials were received. Confirm what additional application materials may be necessary.
- Use a variety of job search strategies in addition to job fairs to round out your job search.
- Inform your Career Services Office of any employment offers and any follow up that may be needed by the employer.
- Review the teacher job vacancies posted on our website, www.nmhu.edu/careerservices - click on Job Postings. Jobs are updated daily.

Why should I send a thank you letter?

Statistics show that only 33% of interviewees send thank-you notes after an interview. Use this as an opportunity to mention anything you may have forgotten to in the interview, thank the interviewer one more time, and express your level of interest in the position. Sending a thank you note can mean the difference between receiving a job offer and not.

Sample Thank you Letter

"I enjoyed the opportunity to meet with you yesterday and would be delighted to teach at Lexington Middle School. As I arrived, I noticed the cleanliness of the building and grounds, which indicates to me that the students and staff care about the school.

I appreciate your desire to hire teachers who are willing to spend extra time with the students before and/or after school. As we discussed, I share your commitment to the students and will provide an "open door" for students and parents. I was also pleased by your personal philosophy of encouraging teachers to try new and creative instructional methods. Through my student teaching and summer day camp experience, I have utilized several methods I learned from my education and am already planning other ideas to implement as a first year teacher.

Meeting with you confirmed my interest in working for the Lexington Schools as a teacher and a coach or club supervisor. I believe my credentials, documented through my application, resume, and reference letters, meet your expectations for this teaching position. Thank you for your time; I look forward to hearing from you again."

Remember...

- This short letter may distinguish you from the competition.
- Keep accurate record of your correspondence and contact with school personnel.
- Mail your material in a large envelope so you do not fold your paperwork.