

Making the Most of the Minnesota Education Job Fair



Minnesota State University, Mankato

Career Development Center

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Registration and Directions

- Register online at www.mnsu.edu/cdc (Click on “Fairs and Events”)
- This event is held at the Minneapolis Convention Center
- Map & directions provided with participant registration materials along with parking information and other tips
- You may register onsite for an increased fee. See the link above for information

Preparing for the Fair...

Things to do

- Apply for jobs ahead of time!
 - Go to the fair information page (www.mnsu.edu/cdc and click on “Fairs and Events”) to find out which districts are hiring in your licensure area. Send application materials prior to the fair. Include in your cover letter a statement like “I’ll be attending Minnesota Education Job Fair and I’d like to set up a time to interview with you there.”
- Gather information on districts you are interested in
- Rehearse your “1-2 minute verbal resume”
- Be ready to talk about your strengths AND provide examples of these!
- HINT: IF YOU HAVE NOT RESEARCHED DISTRICTS, TRY YAHOO! Yahoo Directory of k-12 Schools: http://dir.yahoo.com/Education/K_12/Schools/

Preparing for the Fair— Things to Bring...

- RESUMES! 25+ If you need guidance on developing your resume, visit the CDC “Job Search Handbook” <http://www.mnsu.edu/cdc/resources/>
- Quality leather (or simulated) portfolio with a notepad & pen
- Notes on any school district research you have done or correspondence you have received from districts
- \$ and other personal necessities--remember, you'll have to pay for parking and you may want to purchase something to eat.
- “mini-interview portfolio” for use in interviews
- One copy of your credentials <http://www.mnsu.edu/cdc/students/credentials.html>
- **HINT: KEEP MATERIALS STREAMLINED, DON'T OVERLOAD YOURSELF WITH TOO MUCH TO CARRY!**
- If you are parking in a ramp and can use the skyway, you may choose to leave extra materials (coats, laptops, etc) in your car

When you get to the Fair

- Drop by the MSU table & pick up your name badge, map of the layout, and schedule of district presentations
- Orient yourself to the facility
- Sit in a quiet area and review your district info, plan your strategy, etc.
- Don't be intimidated by the initial "rush" of candidates!
- Observe how other candidates are approaching and interacting with districts...learn from them!
- Find your own way. Don't hang out with your friends and meet districts as a group. You'll seem more professional and independent on your own.



When you get to the Fair (continued)

- Have a plan which includes a prioritized list of districts you most want to touch base with early in the day. There's a chance they may still have open interview times later on.
- Try not to make the district you most want to work for your very first stop...ease into it!
- **HINT: IF THE LINE TO TALK WITH A GIVEN DISTRICT SEEMS TOO LONG, IT MAY BE MORE EFFICIENT TO CHECK BACK LATER IN THE DAY!**

Approaching Interviewers at the Booth

- Be sure to respect the privacy of others as you approach the booth
- Remember, you are “on stage” at all times, which includes standing in line and moving around the booth area
- Make eye contact immediately when introducing yourself
- Give a firm handshake to get you off to a good start
- Remember the recruiter’s name. If you forget, casually refer to their nametag.
- SMILE and be polite--show your enthusiasm!
- Dress professionally, a suit is your best bet!

Approaching Interviewers at the Booth (continued)

- Do not fidget or play with your hair
- Do not rock from side to side
- Do not look around when talking or being spoken to
- Do not chew gum!
- Listen carefully to what the recruiter has to say!
- Avoid using filler words such as “um”, “like”, “you know”
- Show confidence in your voice
- Offer a resume
- Ask for a business card or write down the recruiters name
- Ask what the hiring procedure/timeline is for that district, you want to make sure you are doing it right!

Interviewing for a Position

- Have a 3-point agenda: 1) what am I looking for?; 2) what do I have to offer this district?; 3) what questions do I have for this particular district?
- Be a good listener as well as a good talker! Take your cues from the interviewer (when do I end my response? When is the interview over?)
- Generate & maintain interest by smiling and responding with SPECIFIC & CONCISE answers/examples...keep your voice lively, maintain a pleasant tone, & use humor appropriately
- Respond truthfully, while always painting a positive picture of yourself (ex. "I have not yet had the opportunity to...but in a similar situation I...")

Interviewing for a Position (continued)

- Request school district information if you do not already have it, also request application materials & a copy of the interviewer's business card
- Ask about the hiring process and a timeline...determine actual and potential openings
- Offer a firm handshake at the end of the interview
- Walk away with confidence, remember, you are still “on stage”!
- **HINT: IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE INTERVIEW, GO TO A QUIET AREA AND MAKE NOTES ON TOPICS OF CONVERSATION, CONTACT NAMES, AND FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES! DON'T RELY ON YOUR MEMORY FOR THIS!**

After the Fair

- Send a thank-you letter within 3 days of the event. These can be computer generated or handwritten & should be addressed to the specific interviewer. Include your application & a copy of your credentials if appropriate. See our Credentials website for more information <http://www.mnsu.edu/cdc/students/credentials.html>
- Write to any prospective employers you are still interested in whether you talked with them at the Fair or not.
- Debrief yourself! What would you do differently the next time around?
- **HINT: KEEP GOOD RECORDS OF YOUR CONTACT WITH SCHOOL SYSTEMS, INCLUDING DATES OF YOUR LETTERS/PHONE CALLS, AND COPIES OF ALL APPLICATION MATERIALS WHICH YOU SEND.**
- **HINT: DON'T MEASURE YOUR SUCCESS BY THE # OF JOB INTERVIEWS YOU HAVE AT THE FAIR! MUCH OF WHAT HAPPENS AS A RESULT OF THE FAIR ACTUALLY HAPPENS AFTER THE EVENT!**

Good luck!!

