

# Education Hiring Trends in Eastern Massachusetts 2007-2008 Survey Report

Submitted by:

Christine Paul Tetreault, Director

Laurent Troland, Career Counselor

Denise Diliddo, Office Manager

Career Services Office, Bridgewater State College

June 2008

## Education Hiring Trends Eastern Massachusetts 2007-2008 Survey

### Survey and Responses

The Career Services Office at Bridgewater State College conducted a survey of Education hiring managers in Eastern Massachusetts between November 2007 and January 2008. The survey consists of questions posed to determine:

1. Anticipated teacher openings and hiring projections by school district and subject for the next 1-3 years
2. Expectations for teacher candidate preparedness to be articulated during the interview and job search process
3. Expectations for teacher candidate skills to be demonstrated during the interview process
4. Skill sets that are in demand by education hiring personnel

The survey was e-mailed out in late October 2007 to 261 public school district hiring personnel. A second e-mail was sent out in November 2007 and follow-up phone calls were conducted in December 2007-January 2008. In total, 92 school districts participated in the survey for a response rate of 35%. In all but the short-answer question, there was a 100% response rate to the items posed.

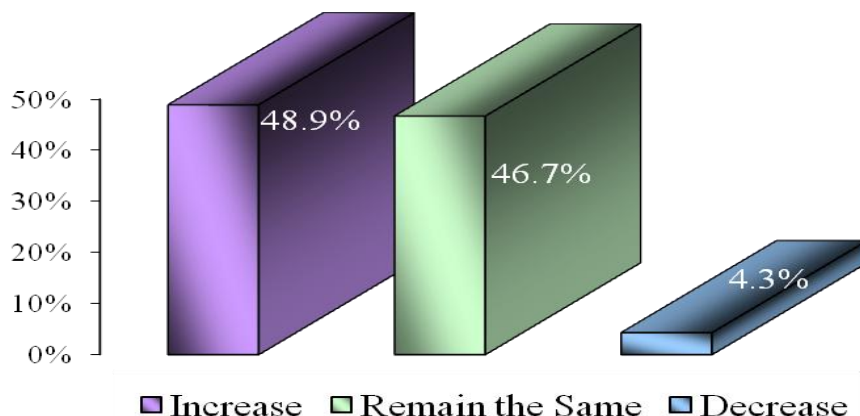
### Current Hiring Trends

***Survey Question #1: In the next 1-3 years, do you anticipate the number of teacher positions to: increase, decrease or remain the same?***

Respondents indicated 49% expected their hiring needs to increase, 47% expected them to remain the same and only 4% of those surveyed expected their hiring needs to decrease.

Education majors can expect favorable market conditions both locally and nationally. There still remains a national shortage of teachers to help replace positions becoming vacant by retiring “baby boomer” teachers but also those teachers who move into the private sector looking to make higher salaries. Additionally, urban and rural school districts continue to be the harder to fill positions with suburban education positions remaining the most highly desired. Data from the O\*Net and Occupational Outlook Handbook both vary slightly, but place Massachusetts education job growth at a rate of 5-7% above the national employment average. Growth rates for education positions are comparable to other New England states.

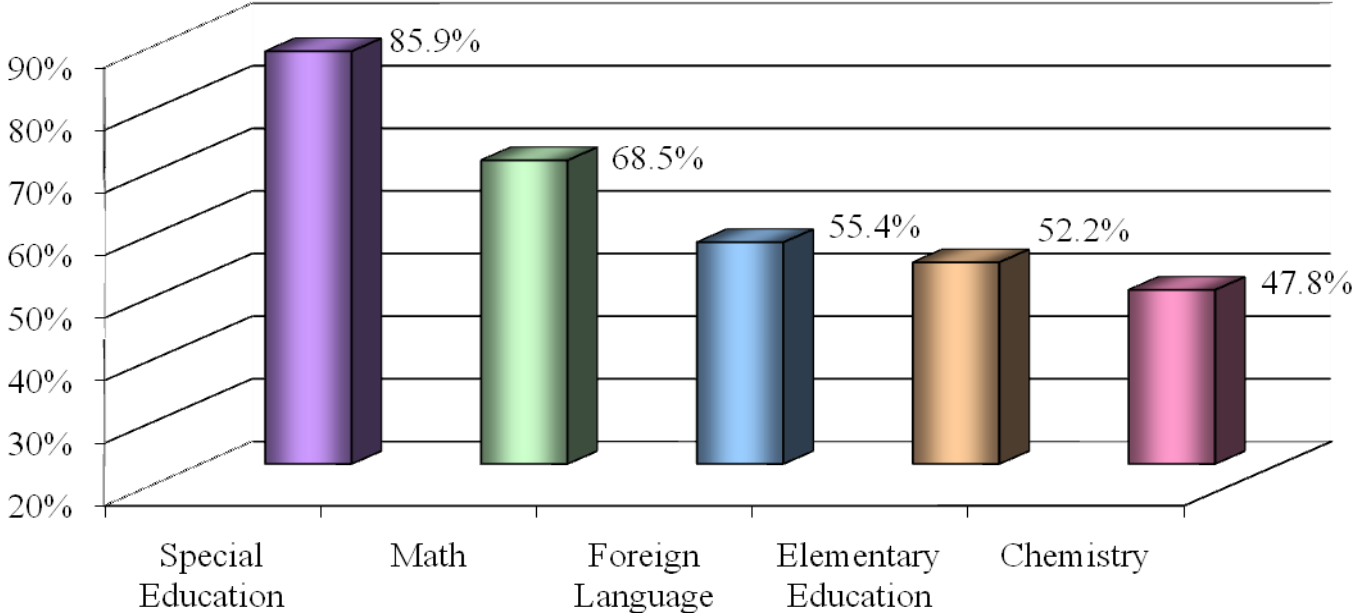
**In the Next Three Years Do You Anticipate  
the Number of Teacher Positions To:**



**Survey Question #2: If you anticipate hiring to increase or remain the same, in what subject area do you expect to hire?**

The top 5 subjects in demand were Special Education, Mathematics, Foreign Languages, Elementary Education and Chemistry. Approximately 86% of districts surveyed identified hiring needs for Special Education positions, 69% for Mathematics, 55% for Foreign Language, 52% for Elementary Education and 48% for Chemistry. The results were not surprising as these subjects have long been difficult to recruit and remain filled. As the National Education Association points out, these subjects tend to have higher turnover due to the high stress and low pay relative to what that degree can command in the private sector.

**Top Five Subject Areas Expected to Hire For**



Below are listed the responses for all subject areas surveyed in this question.

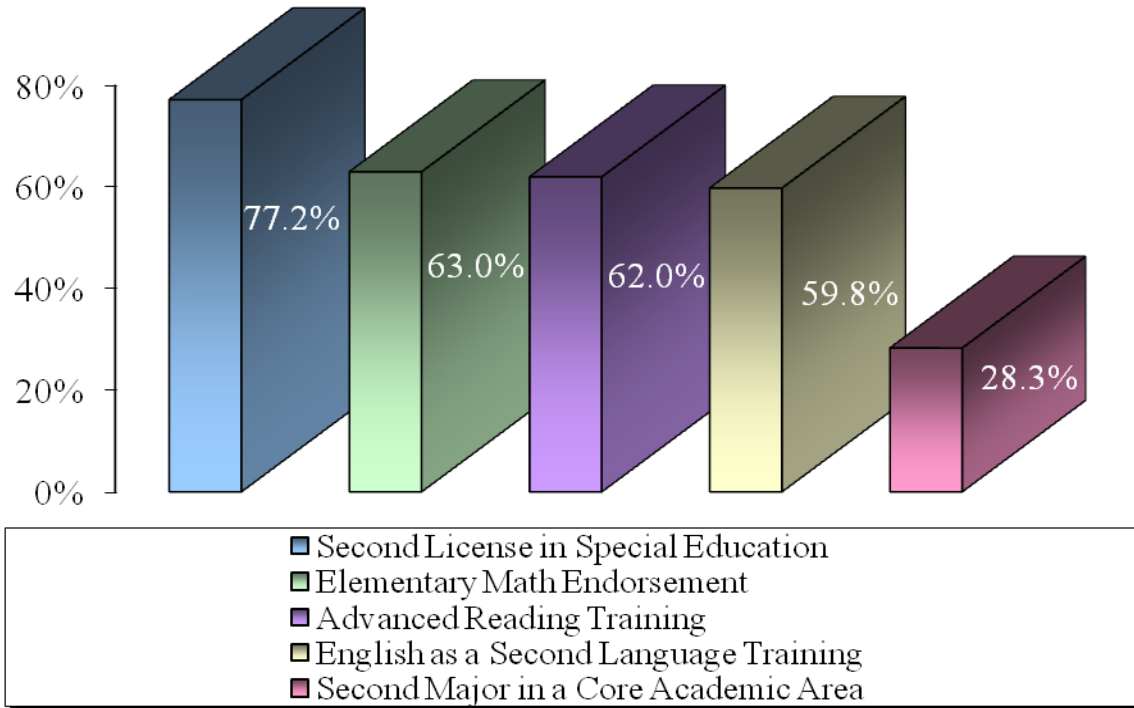
**If you anticipate hiring to increase or remain the same, in what subject areas do you expect to hire?**

<b>Subject Area</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Special Education	85.9
Math	68.5
Foreign Language	55.4
Elementary Education	52.2
Chemistry	47.8
Biology	44.6
Physics	39.1
English	38.0
Technology/Media	37.0
Early Childhood Education	34.8
Social Studies/History	34.8
Guidance/Counseling	27.2
Physical Education	20.8
General Science	20.7
Other	18.5
Music	17.4
Art	16.3
Earth Science	16.3
Health Education	13.0

***Survey Question #3: Which of the following training or additional education would enhance the hiring potential of Elementary Education teacher candidates?***

For Elementary Education majors, the following additional education or training would make them more marketable. Keeping with the high demand for Special Education certification, 77% of those surveyed identified a second license in Special Education as helpful for these students. Sixty-three percent identified the elementary math endorsement, 62% Advanced Reading training and 60% English as Second Language training. Lastly, a second major in a core academic area was acknowledged 28% of respondents.

## Additional Trainings That Would Enhance the Hiring Potential of Elementary Education Candidates

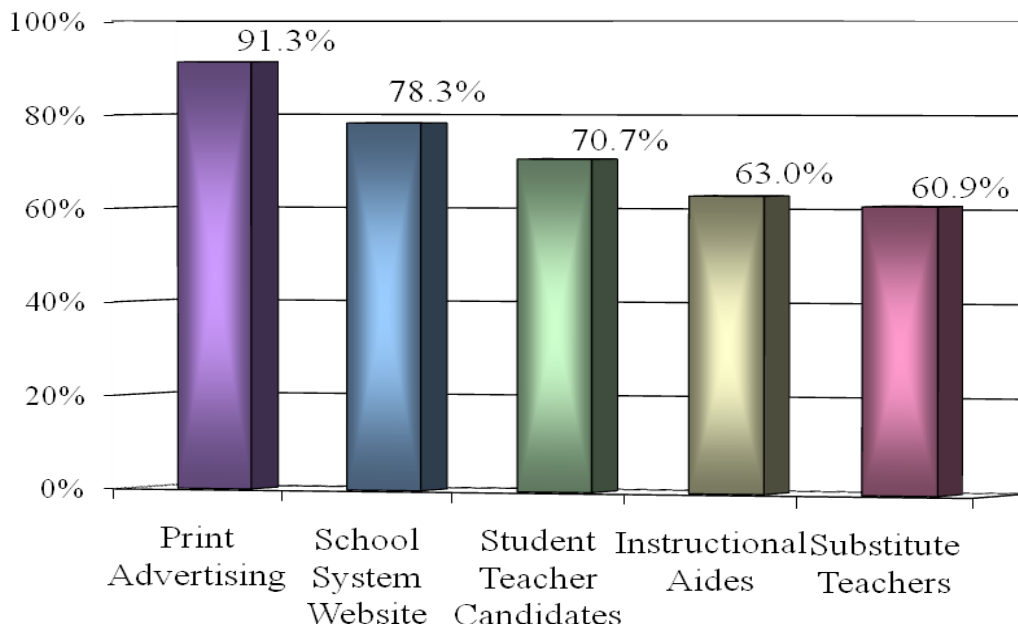


### Top Hiring Methods

#### ***Survey Question #4: Which of the following methods do you use to identify teacher candidates?***

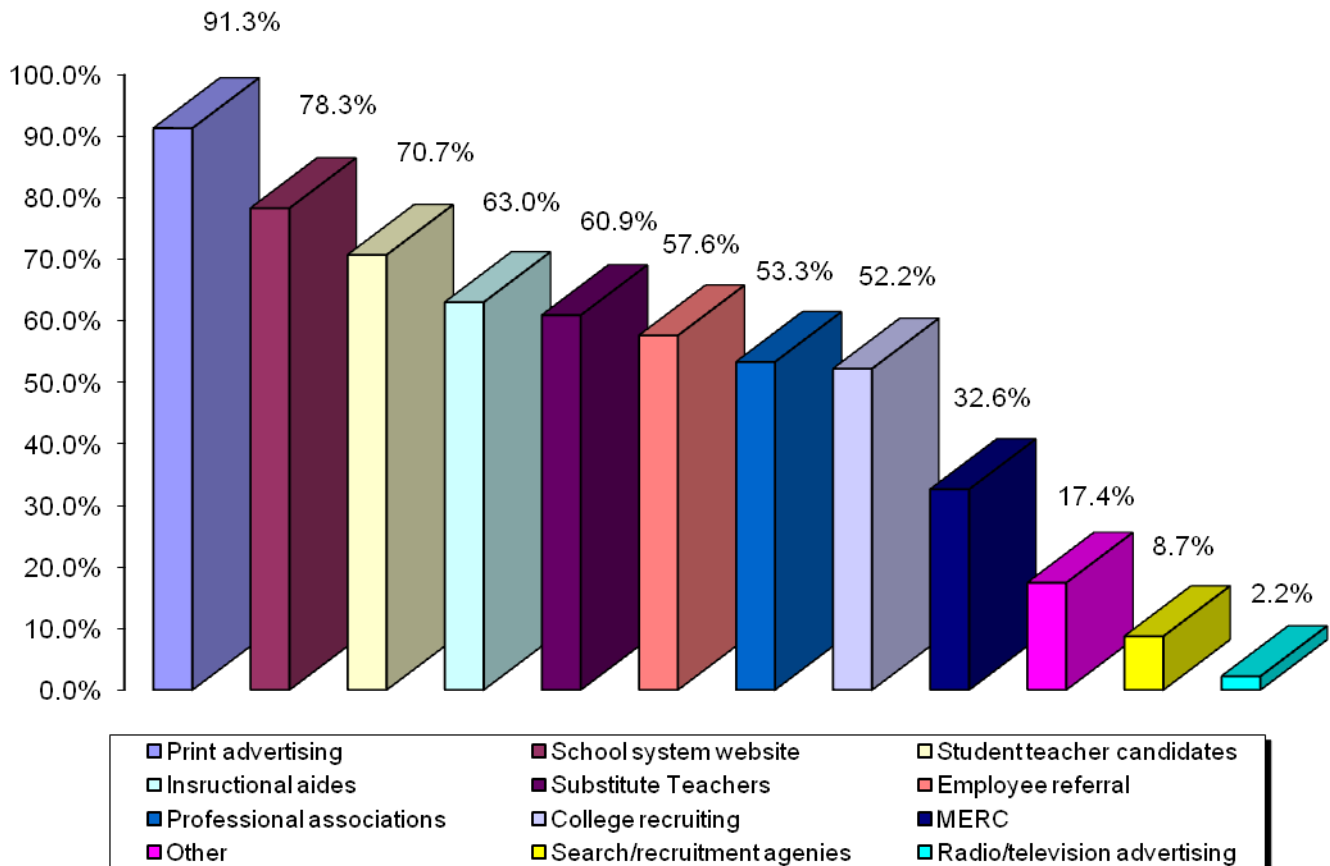
The top five recruiting methods were identified as print advertisement, school system website, student teacher candidates, instructional aides and substitute teachers. Three of the top recruiting methods relate to candidate networking. Identifying hires through student teacher candidates ranked third with 71%, instructional aides fourth with 63% and substitute teachers with 61%. Also intuitively, finding candidates through school district website and materials ranked second at 78% by those surveyed. Careful research of school districts is an important component of the job search. The most utilized method of recruiting was print advertising at 91% of those surveyed. With the utilization of online job posting boards, message boards and other electronic media it was interesting that this approach was so heavily relied upon by districts.

## Top Five Methods Used to Identify Teacher Candidates



The survey asked about utilization of several other advertisement methods which are listed below.

### Which of the following methods do you use to identify teacher candidates?



## Important Materials for Candidates Rated by Hiring Managers

**Survey Question #5: Please rate the importance of the following job search and interview materials.**

Each of the following job search and interview materials was ranked highly by hiring managers. However, the most important factors influencing a hiring manager's review of teacher candidate preparedness was quality letters of recommendation, dressing professionally in a suit and having questions prepared to ask the interviewer. Many factors help hiring managers evaluate the total candidate and below are the complete list of responses.

5. Please rate the following:							
	Extremely Important	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not At All Important	N/A	Rating Average
How important are letters of recommendation in a candidate's application materials?	29.9% (26)	<b>41.4%</b> (36)	23.0% (20)	4.6% (4)	1.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	2.06
Is a minimum GPA standard an important part of your evaluation process?	9.2% (8)	29.9% (26)	<b>46.0%</b> (40)	11.5% (10)	3.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	2.70
How important is having a portfolio in the job interview?	3.4% (3)	26.4% (23)	28.7% (25)	<b>35.6%</b> (31)	5.7% (5)	0.0% (0)	3.14
How important is it for a candidate to leave a copy of their portfolio for you to review?	1.1% (1)	10.3% (9)	19.5% (17)	33.3% (29)	<b>35.6%</b> (31)	0.0% (0)	3.92
How important is it for candidates to be dressed in a suit during a job interview?	26.4% (23)	<b>42.5%</b> (37)	21.8% (19)	8.0% (7)	1.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	2.15
How important is it for candidates to have questions prepared to ask during the interview?	24.1% (21)	<b>40.2%</b> (35)	20.7% (18)	10.3% (9)	4.6% (4)	0.0% (0)	2.31
How important is it for a candidate to call or e-mail to inquire about the status of their application?	0.0% (0)	6.9% (6)	23.0% (20)	26.4% (23)	<b>40.2%</b> (35)	3.4% (3)	4.04
How important is a letter of thanks following an interview?	4.6% (4)	23.0% (20)	27.6% (24)	<b>28.7%</b> (25)	14.9% (13)	1.1% (1)	3.27

## What Candidates Must Articulate During an Interview

### **Survey Question #6: How important is it for the candidate to articulate the following during the interview process?**

Hiring manager's identified knowledge of subject area as the most important item to articulate during the interview process. Classroom management style, approach to student discipline, the ability to work with students that have special need, knowledge of MA curriculum frameworks and accountability were also rated as extremely or very important. Candidates must present a variety of important information to the hiring managers in the short time of the interview.

6. How important is it for the candidate to articulate the following during the interview process?							
	Extremely Important	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not At All Important	N/A	Rating Average
Educational Philosophy	36.8% (32)	41.4% (36)	16.1% (14)	5.7% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.91
Knowledge of your school system and school	13.8% (12)	42.5% (37)	29.9% (26)	11.5% (10)	2.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	2.46
Knowledge of the MA Curriculum Frameworks	55.2% (48)	36.8% (32)	5.7% (5)	1.1% (1)	1.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.56
Knowledge in a subject area	80.5% (70)	16.1% (14)	3.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.23
Classroom management and approach to student discipline	66.7% (58)	27.6% (24)	5.7% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.39
Use of instructional technology	40.2% (35)	40.2% (35)	18.4% (16)	1.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.80
Curriculum development	23.0% (20)	40.2% (35)	27.6% (24)	6.9% (6)	2.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	2.25
Collection and analysis of data to inform instruction	37.9% (33)	41.4% (36)	18.4% (16)	2.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.85
Cooperative learning	21.8% (19)	43.7% (38)	25.3% (22)	8.0% (7)	1.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	2.23
Parent teacher interaction	33.3% (29)	37.9% (33)	24.1% (21)	3.4% (3)	1.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	2.01
Ability to work with students that have special needs	62.1% (54)	25.3% (22)	12.6% (11)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.51
Accountability	51.7% (45)	33.3% (29)	13.8% (12)	1.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.64

## Skill Sets a Candidate Must Demonstrate in an Interview

### **Survey Question #7: How important is it for a candidate to demonstrate the following skills during the interview process?**

The top five skills that hiring managers rated as extremely important for candidates to articulate during the interview are shown below. Teamwork, critical thinking, organization/planning abilities and flexibility all ranked extremely or very important. A candidate's professional presence is essential, 60% of hiring managers surveyed stated that a candidate's poise and presence during the interview was a crucial piece of their evaluation. Below are the results from this survey question.

7. How important is it for a candidate to demonstrate the following skills during the interview process?							
	Extremely Important	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not At All Important	N/A	Rating Average
Writing Ability	48.3% (42)	42.5% (37)	9.2% (8)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.61
Presentation Skills	39.1% (34)	47.1% (41)	13.8% (12)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.75
Professional Presence	59.8% (52)	36.8% (32)	3.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.44
Critical Thinking	56.3% (49)	36.8% (32)	6.9% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.51
Research and Analysis	14.9% (13)	29.9% (26)	48.3% (42)	6.9% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.47
Problem Solving	49.4% (43)	37.9% (33)	11.5% (10)	1.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.64
Computer Skills	23.0% (20)	41.4% (36)	31.0% (27)	4.6% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.17
Organization and Planning	51.7% (45)	44.8% (39)	3.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.52
Teamwork	66.7% (58)	31.0% (27)	2.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.36
Creativity	29.9% (26)	49.4% (43)	19.5% (17)	1.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.92
Flexibility	55.2% (48)	37.9% (33)	6.9% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.52

## Summary

The outlook for education candidates looks strong. Our survey data and research on the national and local job market point to the need for highly qualified educators for the next several years. School districts are faced with many hiring challenges as a generation of educators retire and new educators leave education for the private sector. In June 2005, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future estimated that "teacher turnover was costing the nation's districts \$7 billion annually for recruiting, hiring and training. Nearly a third of all new teachers leave the profession after just three years, and that after five years almost half are gone. Thirty percent of them retired, and 56 percent left to pursue another career or because they were dissatisfied". Researchers suggest new teacher mentor and training programs will help prevent some of the burnout and turnover districts are experiencing.

Of special concern, especially in the northeast, is the shortage of teachers certified in Special Education and English as a Second Language. The survey noted these as top subject areas of critical need in Eastern Massachusetts. The number of students with special needs has been on the rise over the last ten years, while the number of teacher candidates certified in Special Education has not kept pace with this growth. Similarly, the numbers of students who are not English speaking proficient has also dramatically increased in the past several years. There are few teachers who are able to teach English as a Second Language. "Students with limited English skills are nearly four times more likely to drop out than English speaking students", accord to Massachusetts state statistics. There is need to help these students succeed and provide the necessary support.

With these growing needs, districts are struggling to find ways recruit candidates. The most productive recruiting method is to identify candidates from existing pools of student teachers, instructional aides and substitute teachers, as well as traditional methods such as print advertising and district website postings. However, online job databases for educators and the use of campus career center job boards have increased in recent years changing traditional recruitment into an almost year-round activity. Students want one-stop shopping to have access to postings 24/7 making websites such as [www.massupt.com](http://www.massupt.com) a tool for districts wanting to reach candidates. There is also a need for special programs to encourage more individuals to consider a career in education. Programs which assist paraprofessionals in obtaining licensure or that provide interested individuals the skill set necessary for classroom success are needed.

Candidates can best prepare for the job search by careful planning, self assessment, research and clearly presenting their skill as a teacher during the interview. While districts need candidates, they have high expectations regarding candidate preparedness. A strong resume, letters of reference and a polished professional presence will make them a more sought-after candidate. Districts need "highly qualified" candidates that can articulate what they have learned both in and outside of the classroom. Preparation, professionalism and poise remain the keys to candidate success.

## Resources

Anderson, C. "Children in need -- communities struggle to fund and teach special education" -- BSC professor quoted. (2008, March 9). [www.SouthCoastToday.com](http://www.SouthCoastToday.com)

Jan, T. (2008, March 18). Bilingual teachers wanted. *The Boston Globe*

American Federation of Teachers. (2005). *Annual Salary Survey of State Departments of Education*. Accessed from: <http://www.aft.org/salary/>

Making math pay -- good teachers appear when the price is right. (2008, January 29). *USA Today*

Merit pay for teachers begins to earn high grades. (2007, September 13). *USA Today*

National Education Association. (2006). *Portrait of an American Teacher*. Accessed from: [www.teach-now.org](http://www.teach-now.org).

Occupation Outlook Handbook, 2006-07 Edition, accessed from <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/>

O\*Net Online, accessed from <http://online.onetcenter.org/>

Schools fight for teachers -- nearly 9 percent quit the field in 2004-2005. (2007, August 27). *The New York Times*

School systems feel the pinch of competitive recruitment. (2007, September 7). *from* [www.SouthCoastToday.com](http://www.SouthCoastToday.com)

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2005). *The Condition of Education 2005* (NCES 2005-094).