# The EDGE

## Educator's Definitive Guide to Employment

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INTRODUCTION

Today's job market in the field of education is very competitive. The successful process of seeking employment requires a lot of time, effort, patience, perseverance and sometimes geographic flexibility. This publication contains tips on a variety of job search issues and we hope it gives you the "edge" you need to conduct a successful job search.

CERTIFICATION: FINAL STEPS

In order to teach in Pennsylvania public schools, you will need to obtain your PA Instructional I certificate. The application for PA certification and forms for pertinent criminal history clearances are available in the Office of Certification and Education Services in 228 Chambers, 814-865-0488, www.ed.psu.edu/edservices. ANY QUESTIONS YOU HAVE REGARDING PENNSYLVANIA CERTIFICATION SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE PSU OFFICE OF CERTIFICATION IN 228 CHAMBERS, 865-0488. [Do not contact Education Credential Services in 105 BANK OF AMERICA Career Services regarding certification issues.]

This application process is not detailed in The EDGE, but exit criteria is included here because you can expect to complete the following steps in addition to conducting your job search (which is outlined in this book) and completing your degree and teacher certification requirements.

A. Complete the Pre-Certification Competency Examination for Educating the Handicapped. (waived for School Psychology and Special Education majors/degree holders and students who have competed Special Education 400 or 444 with a grade of "C" or better.)

B. Meet the PA Qualifying Scores for the appropriate PRAXIS Series tests in effect at the time of recommendation by the University for certification.

C. Maintain 3.00 cumulative Grade Point Average.

D. File an application for Professional Personnel Certificate with the College of Education before the end of the third week of the semester in which you are to graduate or complete the program.

E. Request Criminal History Record. (Not required for certification, but required by schools).
   1. PA Residents: Submit forms for Acts 33/151 and 34 record checks (available at 182 and 228 Chambers, school districts, and state police stations). Takes 4 weeks and is valid for 1 year from date of issuance.
   2. Non PA Residents: Submit forms for Acts 33/151 and 34 (same as PA Residents - available at 182 and 228 Chambers, school districts, and PA Dept. of Ed.) Takes 6 weeks and is valid for 1 year from date of issuance.

F. Must be a U.S. Citizen.

Teaching Outside of Pennsylvania:
Because Pennsylvania’s standards for educational certification are based upon national accreditation, it is typically a routine process for an individual certified in Pennsylvania to become certified in other states. However, the process may take several weeks, so plan accordingly. Also, determine whether or not you are required to be certified in the state of interest before your application for employment will be considered there.

To find out how to obtain certification in another state, contact the Certification Office in that state. See Appendix A or http://www.ed.psu.edu/edservices for addresses, phone numbers and websites of Bureaus of Certification in other states.
LETTERS OF REFERENCE

School districts that are considering hiring you will want to know that you were successful in other education-related situations. They will require letters of reference and might even call people with whom you have had professional contact. Your student teaching evaluations from your co-operating teacher and Penn State supervisor will be important references, so make sure that your student teaching experience is positive. Other appropriate references include professors, work/volunteer supervisors (especially if education-related), and pre-student teaching supervisors. Academic advisors should be used only if you worked closely with them in some capacity and they can speak specifically to your teaching skills. Develop these relationships early by doing an outstanding job, talking to them about your interests, and asking them for professional advice.

Many educators establish a credentials file with Education Credential Services (ECS) which includes letters of reference. You can ask that your references be sent to ECS if your reference writers do not have a current Penn State digital ID. If they are affiliated with Penn State and have a current digital ID, they can upload their letters directly into your file if you have listed their names and digital IDs in your e-Credentials file. PLEASE NOTE: if you waive your right of access to your letters, you will not have access to view or print copies. If you retain your right of access, you may review your reference at any time and/or print copies of these letters.

It is recommended that you give your references a copy of your resume, allow 1-2 months for them to submit the letter, provide stamped envelopes addressed to ECS if they are not affiliated with Penn State, and write them each a thank you letter.

RESUMES

A well-written resume is very important for an effective job search. Take time to carefully prepare your resume, making sure that it is descriptive, concise and scan-able. Your resume is important because it represents your first attempt to sell yourself to a potential employer.

Be sure to highlight experience you have had working with young people. Also include campus and/or community activities with which you have been involved, particularly if you have held a leadership position. Employers are looking for candidates who have been involved with activities outside of the classroom and who have developed teamwork and leadership skills. While it is not always necessary to include an “objective statement” on a resume that is accompanied by a cover letter, it is important when it will stand alone (i.e. Education Career Fair).

The following pages contain 2 sample resumes for the field of education and should provide general guidelines regarding resume structure and content. For a more thorough review of how to prepare a resume, please obtain a copy of the Career Services handout “Resume Writing”, which is available in Intake (112 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park) or on the Career Services World Wide Web home page (http://www.sa.psu.edu/career).
Jane A. Teacher
5555 Blue Dr.
Yourtown, PA  12121
814-222-3333

OBJECTIVE: To obtain a position as an English teacher (grades 7-12). Special interest in coaching cheerleading and/or field hockey.

EDUCATION: B.S. in Secondary Education -- English, May 200-
The Pennsylvania State University
GPA: 3.62/4.00

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:
Student Teacher, January-May 200-
Smalltown High School; Smalltown, PA
• Planned and executed daily lessons for general English (grade 10) and advanced English (grade 11) classes
• Designed and organized a unit on Early American Literature
• Facilitated class discussions of assigned readings
• Assisted with advising of school newspaper staff

Teacher's Assistant, Summer 200-
Suburban Summer Program; Suburban, PA
• Assisted with planning and implementation of daily activities for 12 children, 10-12 years old
• Supervised and facilitated outdoor activities, such as softball, hiking, and soccer
• Developed and advised the Summer Reading Club

Volunteer, Spring 200-
State College Area School District; State College, PA
• Assisted with various classroom activities for students in 8th-grade English
• Graded assignments and gave practice spelling tests

OTHER EXPERIENCE:
Waitress, The Deli; State College, PA; 8/0--12/0-
Waitress, The Corner Room; State College, PA; 8/0--5/0-
Cashier, Weis Markets; Yourtown, PA; Summers 200- - 0-

HONORS/ACTIVITIES:
Pi Lamda Theta Honor Society
Dean's List, 6 semesters
College of Education Student Council
Sigma Kappa Sorority

REFERENCES: Available Upon Request
John Teacher

Campus
111 Mega Apartment Building
State College, PA  16801
(814) 999-8888

Home
22 My Place
Anytown, PA  17777
(215) 333-4444

EDUCATION:  
B.S. in Elementary Education, May 200-
Minor: Human Development and Family Studies
The Pennsylvania State University
Overall GPA:  3.54/4.00     Major GPA:  3.86/4.00
Dean's List, 5 semesters

CERTIFICATION:  
Pennsylvania Instructional I: Elementary Education (K-6)
Early Childhood Education (N-3)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:  
Student Teacher, Smalltown Elementary School, 9/0- -12/0-; Grade:  A
- Taught 24 students of three mixed ability levels, grades 4 - 6.
- Planned and implemented lessons
- Participated in Instructional Support Team meetings regarding a special needs student
- Implemented behavior modification program
- Conducted conferences with parents

Student Teacher, Your Township Elementary, 4/0- -5/0-; Grade:  A
- Instructed fifth grade class of 22 students
- Planned lessons in a whole language classroom
- Assisted students with writing assignments

RELATED EXPERIENCE:  
Village Supervisor, Boys' Club of Anytown, 5/0- -8/0-
- Responsible for group of 28 boys, age 7-9
- Planned and implemented lessons and activities
- Supervised field trips
- Facilitated various games and outdoor activities

Assistant Group Supervisor, Boys' Club of Your City, 5/xx-8/xx
- Facilitated group activities for a group of 40 boys and girls, age 5-13
- Planned and supervised daily arts and crafts classes

ACTIVITIES:  
Student Pennsylvania State Education Association (SPSEA)
Volunteer for The Second Mile
Big Brother Volunteer

SKILLS:  
Languages: Spanish, sign language

REFERENCES: Available Upon Request
COVER LETTERS

A well-written cover letter is another important element of a successful job search. The purpose of your cover letter is to convince the potential employer that you are a strong candidate for the job and should be invited for an interview.

A cover letter is typically one page and should always be checked carefully for typographical and grammatical errors. Be sure to explain to the potential employer why you are writing, and, if possible, discuss your interest in the specific district to which you are applying. If you have researched the district and can display your understanding of their philosophy of education or can comment on a special program that has been developed, do so.

Highlight and expand upon the training and experience, as listed on your resume that makes you a strong candidate for the position in which you are interested. Also be sure to indicate the area in which you are certified. If this is your first contact with a school district, request an application, as well as any handouts or brochures that describe the district.

Send your cover letter, along with your resume, to either the Superintendent or the Director of Personnel. Be sure to direct your letter to the specific person in that position. Do not begin your letter with "Dear Director of Personnel".

The two sample cover letters that follow should simply serve as guidelines for you. Never copy sample letters word for word. It is important for your cover letter to be a unique representation of you and your background.

For more information about preparing cover letters, refer to the Career Services handout "Letters for the Job Search Process", which is available in Intake (112 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park) or on the Career Services World Wide Web home page (http://www.sa.psu.edu/career).

APPLICATIONS

The importance of completing an error free and professional looking application should not be underestimated. The paperwork you present can greatly influence the decision to invite you for an interview or reject you. Check spelling, punctuation, and grammar very carefully and be prepared to organize your thoughts in a succinct manner. It is a common practice to ask family, friends or professionals to review materials. Most applications, including the PA Standard Application, require that you complete an essay. Topics may include:

- The most important qualities of an outstanding educator.
- Your philosophy of student discipline/classroom management.
- The importance of continuing professional development and what your plans are.
- Essential elements of instruction, administration, or area of certification.

When writing your essays, do not forget to include examples when appropriate. Maintain professionalism, but also exhibit enthusiasm and energy so your essays are not dry and boring.

STANDARD APPLICATION FOR TEACHING POSITIONS IN PENNSYLVANIA

This application is now required for all individuals applying to public schools in the state of Pennsylvania. It may be down loaded from the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s web site (http://www.pde.psu.edu/applica.html).

Note: You may still be required to complete applications for individual school districts in addition to this standard application.
Ms. Carol Green  
Director of Personnel  
Big City School District  
454 School Lane  
Big City, PA 11223

Dear Ms. Green:

I am writing in response to your advertisement for an English teacher. As you can see from my enclosed resume, I have had experience working with young people in a variety of learning environments. I believe this experience, in addition to my educational background, qualifies me for a position with your school district. Please send me an application for employment as soon as possible so that I can meet your deadline of May 30, 20xx.

The Big City Newspaper recently printed an article about the Literature Lovers Club at Big City High School, and I am impressed by the tremendous student interest in this organization. If hired by your district, I would enjoy working with this club. I would bring to this role knowledge and experience gained while organizing and supervising the Summer Reading Club at the Suburban Summer Program in Suburban, PA.

I have had experience teaching students at several different grade and ability levels. My strengths lie in the areas of teaching literature and writing, but I also have developed grammar and spelling lessons. This breadth of experience allows me to be adaptable to the current instructional needs of your district.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Jane A. Teacher

Enclosure
Dr. William W. Smith  
Superintendent  
Smalltown School District  
Red Road  
Smalltown, PA  19999

Dear Dr. Smith:

I am a student at the Pennsylvania State University and will complete my requirements for elementary certification in May of this year. Last Fall, I completed my student teaching practicum at Smalltown Elementary School. Because of my positive student teaching experience there, I would like to apply for a position with your district.

During my student teaching practicum, I used a variety of instructional techniques in my lessons. Some of these techniques included cooperative learning, individual conferences, discovery learning, and hands-on learning activities. To supplement my lessons, I included instructional media such as computers, video tapes, filmstrips, trade books, and bulletin boards.

While at Smalltown Elementary, I also worked with a student diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. I participated in Instructional Support Team meetings regarding this student and was responsible for implementing a behavior modification program. I also conducted a diagnostic evaluation of the student to determine problem areas in reading. As a result of this evaluation, I developed a series of individual learning activities to help teach concepts with which the student was having difficulty.

As indicated on my resume, I have had many experiences working with children of various ages and backgrounds. These experiences demonstrate my commitment to working with children as a career goal. I have developed a good rapport with all of the children with whom I have worked and have dedicated myself to providing them with positive learning experiences.

In addition to my resume, I have enclosed a completed application. I look forward to hearing from you and discussing the possible match between my qualifications and the needs of your school district. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Teacher

Enclosures
JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

The process of seeking employment requires much time and effort. In order to be effective, your job search should be well organized, and you should carefully follow up on any potential jobs for which you have applied.

Because your job search will require you to correspond with many different school districts, maintaining a careful record of your job search activities will enable you to work through this process in an organized and efficient manner. Note the type of contact (i.e. sent resume, phoned to confirm receipt of application, etc.), the date and time of the contact, the person to whom you spoke/wrote, and any follow-up activity required.

In addition, it is very important to follow up with all districts to which you have submitted applications. Prior to the application deadline, contact each district to confirm that they have received all of the necessary application materials.

A variety of strategies can be used when conducting your job search. Several options for locating available positions are listed below.

1. **Respond to ads.**
   School districts will often use vacancy bulletins published by colleges and universities, as well as newspaper ads, to announce openings. Penn State's Education Credential Services office utilizes the Nittany Lion Career Network, an online job posting service powered by NACELink. To get started, go to www.sa.psu.edu/career and click on the Nittany Lion Career Network logo. First-time users will create an account, which will include entering your contact information and establishing your username and password. When you check for subsequent job postings simply log-in with your username and password. Additionally, the Internet can be a used to find career and job search resources as well as vacancy listings. Education Credential Services provides a number of internet resources for your job search needs (see Appendix C).

   If a deadline is listed in the ad, you may want to call and request an application, rather than writing for one. Some districts will require you to send a written request for an application, but many are willing to accept phone requests. When completing the application, be sure that it is neat. Some districts place more importance on the application than on your resume or cover letter.

2. **Flood the market.**
   Send a resume and a cover letter to each school district in which you are interested. Education Credential Services (see p. 15) has school district addresses and phone numbers. It may be helpful to first identify a geographic region that appeals to you. In your cover letter, ask to have an application forwarded to you, along with any other materials that would provide information about the district. You can also call to ask for the application and information and then send the resume, cover letter, and application together. If you have not received a response from a school district within approximately 3 weeks, call them. Ask if they received your request for an application and when you might expect to receive it. You may also want to ask whether or not they are anticipating any openings in your certification area. This job search strategy is important because not all vacant positions are advertised. Flooding the market is one way to target such hidden opportunities.

3. **Networking.**
   Utilizing your contacts with other professionals in the field is another effective way to tap into the hidden job market. Consider the following scenario. A superintendent receives a current teacher's resignation on August 20th. School starts August 30th, and he/she needs a replacement quickly. Advertising the position would take too much time, so he/she calls a friend who happens to also be a Penn State student teaching supervisor. The Penn State supervisor knows that you are still waiting for an offer and refers your name. The superintendent calls you, you apply for the position, and a week later you have a new job. That is the power of networking. Take the time to get to know the teachers and the principal at your student-teaching site. Your student-teaching supervisor and other Penn State faculty members are also important networking contacts. Spend time with these individuals. Talk with them about your interests and career goals. Ask them to let you know if they become aware of any openings in your area of certification. Through networking, you may learn of a vacancy that is unknown to most potential candidates.
4. **Attend the annual Education Career Day.**
   The College of Education and Career Services co-sponsor the annual Education Career Day every Spring. Typically, 100-110 different employers send representatives to this Career Day to recruit students for their organizations. These representatives discuss possible job openings, accept resumes, and some even conduct interviews.

5. **Use a placement agency.**
   As a supplement to your self-directed job search, you may choose to enlist the services of a teacher placement agency. If you do, be sure that you fully understand your contract with the agency, including any fees that you must pay. Career Services does not endorse or promote specific placement agencies. Check your phone directory for possible listings of such services.

6. **Use the Internet**
   The Internet, including the World Wide Web, can be used in your job search to gather information about job search skills, employers and career fields (including education); to find job vacancies; to post your resume; and to discuss topics of interest. Information on “The Web” is not located in your computer, but rather it allows you to travel to other sites around the world to see what other people have made available. If you do not know how to use the Internet yet, you should make an effort to learn because: 1) Soon almost everyone will know how (including your students). 2) School districts look for teachers with computer knowledge. 3) It is a good job search tool. 4) It’s fun.

   As a Penn State student, you can use the public labs on campus or be connected, via modem, to an “Internet browser” through your ACCESS account even if you are not on campus. For information, contact the Information Technology Services (ITS) at 863-2494. The ITS will also be able to inform you of upcoming workshops on learning to use the Internet.

   You can pick up the handout “Job Searching on the World Wide Web” in Intake (112 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park). During the first half of each semester, Career Services offers workshops on Job Searching on the Internet. A good place to start exploring is through the “Job Search” link on Career Services’ Home Page (http://www.sa.psu.edu/career). We also have “links” that will allow you to view sites of particular interest to educators, so check our site periodically for these.

   As indicated earlier, the job search process is very time-consuming. Be prepared to devote several hours per week to the task of finding employment. You are encouraged to use as many of the job search strategies listed above as possible. Doing so will increase your chances of locating a position.

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**THE INTERVIEW**

So, you have sent out several applications and are now waiting for responses. Suddenly, your phone rings. It's a representative from a school district, and he/she is inviting you to come for an interview. After the initial excitement wears off, you start to feel nervous. You have impressed these people on paper, but now, more importantly, you need to impress them in person. Don't panic. Just remember the 3 R’s of interviewing: Research, Rehearse, and Relax.

1. **Research**
   When you request an application from a school district, you should also request to have brochures and other informational materials that describe the district forwarded to you. Review those materials carefully and learn as much as you can about the district. What is the district's philosophy of education? What is the student to teacher ratio? What are the facilities like? What special programs have been developed?

   You will also want to do some research on yourself. Set aside some time for personal introspection. Think about what motivated you to pursue a career in education. What special qualities do you have that make you an effective teacher? What are your goals for the future? What is your own philosophy of education? In addition, you should be very familiar with your resume, and be prepared to expand upon the education, experiences, and activities that are listed on it.

   The final phase of the pre-interview research process involves understanding how you "fit" with the district. Is your philosophy of education similar to theirs? Are they developing and/or implementing special programs that you feel are particularly important? Is their approach to instruction consistent with
yours? How might you be able to assist with co-curricular activities? This last question is particularly important. Showing a district that you also have skills to offer outside the classroom can be a big selling point for you.

2. Rehearse

Do at least one practice interview just to get some sense of what it might feel like and how you might respond. Career Services offers a Mock Interview program to help you sharpen your interview skills. For more information about this service, refer to the section in this guide entitled “Other Services and Resources Available at Career Services”. If you are unable to utilize this service, ask a friend or relative to rehearse the interview with you. Be prepared to answer behavioral based or situational type questions. Listed below are examples of questions you might be asked in an interview:

- Why do you want to teach in our school district?
- Why did you choose your particular subject area or grade level?
- What are your strengths? Weaknesses?
- What objectives would you like to achieve in your subject area or grade level?
- Tell me about your most difficult discipline situation and how you handled it.
- How would you evaluate yourself as a teacher?
- Tell me about a campus or community activity in which you have been involved.
- What is the most important thing you learned from student teaching?
- Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with your cooperating teacher. How did you handle it and what was the outcome?

Think about these questions and how you might respond to them. Don't develop specific answers that you could quote verbatim in the interview, but do think about general points that you would like to emphasize. For a list of additional interview questions, see Appendix B.

Also, develop a list of questions that you would like to ask about the school and/or the position. In addition to the interviewer trying to decide whether or not to hire you, you are also trying to decide if you would like to work for this district. See Appendix B.

Prepare your interviewing wardrobe. Choose tasteful, conservative attire that presents a professional image. Although business suits are not typically seen in the classroom, they are generally expected during an interview. Women are encouraged to wear a suit with a skirt and jacket. Pantsuits are not appropriate for the interview. It has been said that often the decision about hiring you will be made within the first 60 seconds of an interview and will be based in large part on your appearance.

3. Relax.

After you have done your background research and practiced your interviewing skills, relaxing should be easier. Be on time. Try to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to your interview. Doing so will give you some time to get settled and collect your thoughts before the interview begins.

Think about the interview simply as a conversation. Be yourself, and display your enthusiasm for the teaching profession. School districts are seeking candidates who can display effective oral communication skills and who are honest, dependable, responsible, cooperative, adaptable, and mature.

Be prepared for a group interview. Some interviews may have four or five individuals participating in the interviews.

When responding to the interviewer's questions, give details and examples. Be specific about your experiences. Listen to the interviewer's question before answering. Determine whether a simple or more expanded response is appropriate. Don't hesitate to ask for clarification if needed. If the interviewer becomes silent, use that silence to your benefit. Mention some specific information about the district that you found interesting and why. Ask the interviewer a question about the district/position. Utilize this time to discuss any of your qualifications or experiences that are important but have not yet been mentioned. Make the silence work in your favor.

At the end of the interview, extend a firm handshake, and thank the interviewer for meeting with you. Clarify the district's hiring timeline, and determine whether or not you need to forward any additional materials. Finally, be sure to reiterate your interest in the position and the district.

After the interview, send a thank you letter to the interviewer. Thank the interviewer again for his/her time, and indicate your continued interest in the position. If possible, comment on something specific about the district or position that interests you.
EDUCATION JOB SEARCH TIMELINE

To help you understand how these various steps in the job search process fit together, an Education Job Search Timeline is provided below. The dates provided are not set in stone. They will simply give you some guidelines for planning your job search. Steps to certification are not included here.

NOW: FALL AND SPRING GRADUATES

1. Gather resources related to the job search process.
   a) AAEE Annual/The Job Search Handbook for Educators are available in 105 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park, University Park
   b) Career Services Handouts: Resume Writing, Interviewing Skills, Letters for the Job Search Process - Intake (115 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park, University Park) or see Career Services WWW home page at http://www.sa.psu.edu/career
2. Meet with a counselor at Career Services to plan your job search
3. Ask for Letters of Reference (see Letters of Reference, page 2)
4. Complete e-Credentials form online to establish credentials file if it was not set up during your e-Credentials session the semester before student teaching

FALL GRADUATES:

October
1. Call/write to school districts to request applications and information about each district.
2. Prepare resumes and cover letters.

November
1. Send resumes, cover letters, and completed applications to districts in which you would like to teach/substitute (“flood the market”).
2. Respond to vacancy announcements.

December
1. Continue to send resumes, cover letters, and applications to school districts in response to vacancy announcements and to “flood the market”.
2. Begin preparing for interviews. Rehearse with friends, family, and/or a Career Services counselor.

****Graduation: Student-teaching evaluations forwarded to ECS. Remember to add your transcript to your ECS file!****

January
1. Verify completeness of e-Credentials file online.
2. Submit requests through the e-Credentials system to forward credentials file to districts in which you have applied for teaching/substituting positions. For some districts, having your resume, cover letter, and application is sufficient until they want to conduct interviews. However, some might appreciate the file from the start. When in doubt, call the district and ask what their preference is (and if there are any open positions).
3. Forward any additional materials that your school districts have requested.
4. Confirm with districts that your application materials are complete.
5. Begin teaching/substituting.

Continue the process throughout the spring until you get a job.
SPRING GRADUATES (AND FALL GRADUATES WHO ARE STILL LOOKING):

Now: See previous page under Now.

February
1. Call/write to school districts to request applications and information about that district.
2. Prepare resumes and cover letters. Fall grads update your resume as you substitute.

March
1. Send resumes, cover letters, and completed applications to districts in which you would like to teach/substitute (“flood the market”).
2. Respond to vacancy announcements.

April/Early May
1. Continue to send resumes, cover letters, and applications to school districts in response to vacancy announcements and to “flood the market”.
2. Fall grads should update file with new references from substitute teaching.
4. Attend the annual Education Career Day.

****Graduation: Student-teaching evaluations forwarded to ECS. Remember to add your transcript to your ECS file!****

Late May
1. Verify completeness of e-Credentials file online.
2. Submit requests through the e-Credentials system to forward credentials file to districts in which you have applied for teaching/substituting positions. For many districts, having your resume, cover letter, and application is sufficient until they want to conduct interviews. However, some might appreciate it from the start. When in doubt, call the district and ask what their preference is (and if there are any open positions).
3. Forward any additional materials that each district has requested.
4. Confirm with school district that your application materials are complete.

June - August (months when most offers are extended)
1. Send credentials files upon request to districts that do not have them.
2. Interview for positions. Send thank you letters after interviews.

STUDENT TEACHERS ABROAD
Most school districts do their hiring April through August, so being overseas should not pose a big problem. However, it is especially important that you plan ahead! Gather school district addresses and information before you leave so you can work on your resumes and cover letters while you are abroad. Also, plan to take your PRAXIS tests before you leave, especially if you are student teaching spring semester. Otherwise your certification could be delayed several weeks and you may not receive your scores until August.

When you return to the states, you should be ready to send your resumes and cover letters right away. Request and return applications as soon as you can. If you do this, you should be on schedule to follow the same timeline as everyone else. To avoid missing early deadlines or positions advertised while you are away, you can enlist a friend or family member to inform you of pertinent information and mail things for you.
HOW CAN CAREER SERVICES HELP?

EDUCATION CREDENTIAL SERVICES
105 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park
ECS@sa.psu.edu or 814-814-865-5131

What is Education Credential Services (ECS)?
ECS is a separate area within Career Development and Placement Services specifically for individuals pursuing careers in the field of education. The services and resources listed below are available to both undergraduate and graduate students of Penn State.

Job Vacancy Listings
We are using the Nittany Lion Career Network, an on-line job posting services powered by NACElink, to post our education positions. To get started, go to the Career Services homepage, www.sa.psu.edu/career and click on the Nittany Lion Career Network logo. First time users will create an account, which will include entering your contact information and establishing your username and password. When you check for subsequent job postings, simply log-in with your username and password.

JOB SEARCH RESOURCES

Job Search Handbooks (free to students)
- The EDGE (produced by Career Services)
- The Job Search Handbook for Educators/AAEE Annual

Job Search Directories and Related Materials in 115 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park
- National Directory for Employment in Education
- Handbook of Private Schools
- Higher Education Job Search
- NASDTEC Manual on Certification
- Overseas Employment for Educators
- Patterson's American Education Directory
- Pennsylvania Education Directory
- Schools Abroad
- The Directory for Exceptional Children

Other Related Materials on File in 105 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park
- Education Week (newspaper)
- Praxis (formerly NTE) Registration Bulletins

Credentials Service
If you are seeking a teaching or administrative position in elementary, secondary, or higher education, you may establish a credentials file online at http://www.sa.psu.edu/career/ecredentials/. The e-Credentials Service is a service designed for students/alumni, reference writers and potential employers.

Individuals seeking employment in the field of education typically establish a credentials file with Career Services (105 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park). You may add the following to your Credentials files to send to employers: reference letters, student teaching evaluations, and Penn State Transcript. The credentials file will be forwarded, at your request, to potential employers in support of your applications for employment. Undergraduate and graduate students may create their credentials files/dossiers at any time.

Upon making your first request, your file will become active. For current students, files are active for six months at no charge, after which you will be prompted to reactivate your file for one year ($45.00) or two
years ($75.00). During the six months, you will only pay fees to have your requests processed. Alumni who do not activate their files while they were students must pay the activation fee in order for requests to be processed ($45 for one year or $75 for two years). The first five requests are sent at no cost unless special processing is requested. A processing fee is required for each additional request.

You may set up an appointment to discuss planning a career in education through the Drop-in Counseling office in 112 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park.

OTHER SERVICES AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT CAREER SERVICES

Drop-in Counseling
A Career Services staff member is available Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. to provide assistance on a drop-in basis. No appointment is necessary, and this staff member will be able to spend about 5-10 minutes with you. The Drop-in Counseling service is useful for having your resume or cover letter reviewed. You can also meet with the Drop-in Counselor if you need assistance locating particular resources (i.e. employer directories, job search books, etc.).

Individual Appointments
One-hour appointments are available for students who would like to discuss job search issues (such as writing resumes and cover letters, interviewing, job searching) with a counselor. To schedule an appointment, stop by 111 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park. Note: You do not need an appointment to establish or inquire about your credentials file.

Career Services Handouts
Career Services has prepared a number of informational packets on various topics, including resume writing, letters for the job search process (cover letters, thank you letters, etc.), and interview skills. These handouts, which supplement the information provided in this guide, are available at Intake (112 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park).

Career Library (115 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park)
The Career Library is a small library containing a variety of career-related resources. Included among these resources are various books and videos covering job search issues such as writing resumes and interviewing. The Career Library also includes many employer directories and occupational information resources, as well as information regarding summer employment and internships. In addition, the Career Library contains several directories of graduate school programs.

Mock Interviews
A practice interview can be scheduled in the Career Services Interview Training Center with either a counselor or a trained student interviewer. This 30-minute mock interview is videotaped and reviewed with you, and it provides a great opportunity to refine your interview skills. To schedule an appointment, call 814-865-2377 or stop by 111 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park.

Seminar Series
Career Services offers seminars several times each week during the beginning of the semester on topics such as resume writing, interviewing, and job search strategies. These seminars are held in 103 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park, and no advanced registration is required. Contact Career Services for dates and times.

Counselor Education 303: Career Search for Educators
This one-credit career development course is available to juniors and seniors who plan to seek employment in the field of education. Course content includes the development of cover letters and resumes, review of resources to assist with the job search, discussions on contemporary issues in education, interview skill development, identification of alternative job markets, etc. The course is offered both Fall and Spring semesters and is taught by professional staff members of Career Services.
ALTERNATIVES TO PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHING

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

In addition to seeking employment in public schools, you may also want to explore possible opportunities with private schools. If you choose to pursue a private school position, please note that you will need to start this job search several months prior to your public school job search. You may want to work with a career counselor on this part of your job search. The Handbook of Private Schools, which provides a complete listing of private schools in the United States, is also available in 115 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park.

TEACHING ABROAD

Many students would like to utilize their teaching skills abroad. You may choose to teach in Department of Defense Dependents Schools, in overseas American elementary and secondary schools assisted by the Department of State, in schools established by American businesses for their employee’s dependents, or in international schools. There may also be some private or non-profit organizations in need of individuals with teaching skills. Teaching opportunities of all types may be short-term (a month or two) through one year or more.

While such positions are difficult to come by, they are not impossible to locate, either on your own or through the help of an employment agency. There are several resources in the Career Library (115 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park which may be of help in identifying places to write for more information. Some are:


We get a few international job postings in ECS (105 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park) which you may want to take note of. Much of what we get in terms of job announcements are those handled through employment agencies, which may charge a fee. You may want to talk with the intake counselor to discuss the pros and cons of such a job search method or get helpful hints on other job search methods.

ALTERNATIVE CAREERS

Many individuals with training in education pursue employment in other fields. For some, the competitive job market for teachers leads to this decision. For others, a conscious choice is made to explore other career options.

If you are considering career alternatives, set aside some time for introspection. First, think about your interests. What kind of work would you like to do? In what type of environment would you like to work?

Second, consider your skills and abilities. While preparing to be a teacher, you have developed a variety of skills that are easily transferable to a wide range of occupations. Examples of such skills include:

- planning
- public speaking
- meeting deadlines
- training
- making subject matter interesting

- communicating orally and in writing
- organizing
- motivating
- assessing
- keeping accurate records

Can you really think of any career field that could not benefit from this combination of skills?
Think about the skills and abilities that you have developed over the past few years, and make a list of them. Being aware of what you have to offer an employer is critical to conducting a successful job search.

Next, explore your options. Gather information about different occupations, and think about how your interests and abilities fit those occupations. The Career Library, located in 115 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park, provides a variety of resources to assist you with the process of career exploration. Also, your local library should maintain occupational information resources.

Examples of possible alternative career fields might include the following:

**Human Resources**
- training and development
- personnel recruitment and selection
- benefits administration

**Sales**
- insurance
- real estate
- travel

**Non-Profit Organizations**
- direct service
- administration

**Communications**
- publishing/writing
- media -- TV, radio, magazines, newspapers
- public relations/advertising

**Human Services** (might require graduate degree)
- counseling
- psychology
- social work

**Management**
- almost anywhere

The Educator's Guide to Alternative Jobs and Careers by Ronald Krannich may be a helpful resource for those of you considering employment opportunities outside of the field of education. This book is available in the Career Library in 115 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park. Other possible resources include the following:


Consider your options carefully, and try to find a position that fits you well. Get your foot in the door of a new profession through volunteering, internships, joining professional associations, and especially networking. Once you know more about your desired profession, you will be able to relate your skills to a specific career field or position. You will want to apply to advertised positions as well as tap the hidden job market. Take advantage of your cover letter and follow up calls to spell out how your skills would benefit an organization. You could consider a combination of a “chronological” and a “functional” resume which summarizes skills and accomplishments, as well as listing jobs you have held. You can get resume ideas from books located in 115 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park and job search handouts in Intake (112 Bank of America Career Services Center - University Park).

Students who would like assistance with this decision-making process or the job search can meet with a career counselor at Career Services. (see Individual Appointments above)

**CONCLUSION**

The EDGE was designed to be a comprehensive guide to finding employment in the field of education. We hope the information provided in it has enabled you to better understand the job search process and to develop important job search skills. In today's tough job market, you need to have an "edge" over the competition. Making use of the information provided in this guide is the first step toward developing that "edge". Best wishes for a successful job search.
## Appendix A
### State Certification Offices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Address Details</th>
<th>Phone Numbers</th>
<th>Website Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alabama</strong></td>
<td>50 N. Ripley St. P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, AL 36104</td>
<td>334-242-9700; Fax 334-242-0498</td>
<td><a href="http://www.alsde.edu/html/home.asp">http://www.alsde.edu/html/home.asp</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alaska</strong></td>
<td>801 W. 10th St., Suite 200, Juneau, AK 99801-1894</td>
<td>907-465-2831; Fax 907-465-2441</td>
<td><a href="http://www.eed.state.ak.us/TeacherCertification/">http://www.eed.state.ak.us/TeacherCertification/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arizona</strong></td>
<td>1535 W. Jefferson St., Phoenix, AZ 85007</td>
<td>602-542-4361; Fax 602-542-1141</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ade.state.az.us/">http://www.ade.state.az.us/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arkansas</strong></td>
<td>4 Capitol Mall, Little Rock, AR 72201-1071</td>
<td>501-682-4475</td>
<td><a href="http://arkedu.state.ar.us/">http://arkedu.state.ar.us/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>California</strong></td>
<td>1900 Capitol Ave., Sacramento, CA 95814-7000</td>
<td>916-445-8778; Fax 916-323-4508</td>
<td>[<a href="http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/defaul">http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/defaul</a> t.html](<a href="http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/defaul">http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/defaul</a> t.html)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Colorado</strong></td>
<td>201 E. Colfax, RM 105, Denver, CO 80203</td>
<td>303-866-6628; Fax 303-866-6866</td>
<td>[<a href="http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_licen">http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_licen</a> se.htm](<a href="http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_licen">http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_licen</a> se.htm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connecticut</strong></td>
<td>P.O. Box 150471, RM 243, Hartford, CT 06115-0471</td>
<td>860-713-6969; Fax 860-713-7017</td>
<td>[<a href="http://www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/cert/index">http://www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/cert/index</a> .htm](<a href="http://www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/cert/index">http://www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/cert/index</a> .htm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>District of Columbia</strong></td>
<td>825 N. Capitol St., NE 6th Floor, Washington, DC 20002</td>
<td>202-442-5347; Fax 202-442-5316</td>
<td><a href="http://teachdc.org/">http://teachdc.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Georgia</strong></td>
<td>2 Peachtree St., Suite 6000, Atlanta, GA 30303</td>
<td>800-869-7775; Fax 404-232-2560</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gapsc.com/TeacherCertification.asp">http://www.gapsc.com/TeacherCertification.asp</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hawaii</strong></td>
<td>680 Iwilei Rd., Suite 400, Honolulu, HI 96817</td>
<td>808-587-5580; Fax 808-587-5595</td>
<td><a href="http://rsc.k12.hi.us/tc/">http://rsc.k12.hi.us/tc/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Idaho</strong></td>
<td>83720, Boise, ID 83720-0027, 208-332-6800</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.sde.id.us/certification/">http://www.sde.id.us/certification/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Illinois</strong></td>
<td>100 N. First St., Springfield, IL 62777</td>
<td>800-845-8749; Fax 217-524-1289</td>
<td><a href="http://www.isbe.state.il.us/certification/default.htm">http://www.isbe.state.il.us/certification/ default.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indiana</strong></td>
<td>101 W. Ohio St., Suite 300, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2133</td>
<td>317-232-9010; Fax 317-232-9023</td>
<td><a href="http://www.doe.state.in.us/dps/licensing/welcome.html">http://www.doe.state.in.us/dps/licensing/welcome.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Iowa</strong></td>
<td>Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146</td>
<td>515-281-5294; Fax 515-242-5988</td>
<td><a href="http://www.state.ia.us/boee/">http://www.state.ia.us/boee/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kansas</strong></td>
<td>120 S.E. 10th Ave., Topeka, KS 66612</td>
<td>785-296-8010; Fax 785-296-4318</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ksbe.state.ks.us/Welcome.html">http://www.ksbe.state.ks.us/Welco me.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kentucky</strong></td>
<td>1024 Capitol Center Dr., Suite 225, Frankfort, KY 40601</td>
<td>502-573-4606; Fax 502-573-1610</td>
<td><a href="http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/default.htm">http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/ default.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Louisiana</strong></td>
<td>P.O. Box 94064, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064</td>
<td>877-453-2721; Fax 225-342-3499</td>
<td><a href="http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/tsac/home.html">http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/tsac/home.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maryland</strong></td>
<td>200 W. Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21201-595</td>
<td>410-767-0412; Fax 410-333-8963</td>
<td><a href="https://certification.msde.state.md.us/">https://certification.msde.state.md.us/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18
South Dakota
700 Governor's Dr.
Pierre, SD 57501-2291
605-773-3553; Fax 605-773-6139
http://doe.sd.gov/teachers/index.asp

Virginia
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120
800-292-3820; 804-225-2831
http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/newv
doe/teached.html

Virgin Islands
44-46 Kongens Gad
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00802
809-774-5240

Tennessee
Andrew Johnson Tower
6th Floor
Nashville, TN 37243-0375
615-741-2731; Fax 615-741-6236
http://www.k-12.state.tn.us/tcertinf/

Washington
Old Capitol Bldg.
P.O. Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504-7200
360-725-6400; Fax 360-586-0145
http://www.k12.wa.us/certification/

Virgin Islands
2133 Hospital St.
St. Croix, Virgin Islands 00820
809-773-1095

Texas
4616 W. Howard Lane
Suite 120
Austin, TX 78728
512-238-3200; Fax 512-238-3201
http://www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnlin
e/certinfo/becometeacher.asp?width=1
024&height=768

West Virginia
1900 Kanawha Blvd E.
Charleston, WV 25305-0330
304-558-7010; Fax 304-558-0459
800-982-2378
http://tennessee.gov/education/lic/

US Dept. of Defense
DoDDS
Employment Information
(Teachers)
Personnel Center
4040 North Fairfax Drive
Arlington, VA 22203-1635
Telephone: (703) 696-3068

Utah
250 E. 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, UT 84111-4200
801-538-7751; Fax 801-538-7769
http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/cert/

Wisconsin
125 S. Webster St.
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841
608-266-3390, 800-441-4563;
http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsis/tel/i
ndex.html

Wyoming
2300 Capital Ave.
Hathaway Bldg., 2nd Floor
Cheyenne, WY 82002-0050
307-777-7675; Fax 307-777-6234
http://ptsb.state.wy.us/

Vermont
120 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501
802-828-2445; Fax 802-828-3148
http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/m
aincert.html

PLEASE NOTE:

When corresponding with the various departments of education, please provide a complete address –
include the name of the department and the certification office in the address.

See example below:

Pennsylvania State Department of Education
Office of Teacher Certification
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333
Appendix B

Sample Interview Questions for Educators

INTERVIEWER QUESTIONS

• What are your short and long range goals?
• Tell me about your personal philosophy of education.
• How will you organize your class for learning?
• Why did you choose to become a teacher?
• How will you go about finding out about students’ attitudes and feelings about your class?
• How do you feel about the phrase, “When you are teaching, be sure to command the respect of your students from the beginning and all will go well.”?
• Have you worked with children from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds?
• In your opinion, what is the purpose of public/private education?
• Why did you select Penn State?
• Do you have special skills or interests that you could contribute outside the classroom?
• What reading programs are you familiar with?
• What plans do you have for further education?
• Tell me about a lesson plan that you found particularly effective and why it was effective.
• What accomplishment has given you the greatest satisfaction?
• How has your education prepared you to become a teacher?
• How would you approach a parent whose child is struggling to keep up with the class material?
• What new ideas can you bring to this school district?
• How would your past supervisors describe you?
• How/what do you know about this school district?
• How will you evaluate pupil progress?
• What are your favorite subjects to teach?
• Based on your student teaching experience, what is your best quality as a teacher?
• What did you find to be the most difficult task as a student teacher?
• What has been your favorite job/experience so far? Why?
• Do you have any questions for me? (Tip: You should!)

TYPES OF QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT ASK (Ref: AAEE Annual, 31st Edition, p.23)

• How many classes a day will I be teaching?
• What textbooks does the school district use in this subject area?
• What is the teacher/student ratio?
• How are teachers assigned to extracurricular activities?
• Does the district have a statement of educational philosophy or mission?
• Do teachers participate in curriculum review and change?
• Could you tell me about the students who attend this school.
• Do parents support the schools? Does the community?

*See additional information and questions on Interviewing.*

- Appendix C -
Some Job Search Sites Online
FOR EDUCATORS

*NOTE: The World Wide Web changes constantly. These sites were available at these URL’s (addresses) at publication. We acknowledge that changes may have occurred between printing and your use of the WWW.

General Information

Career Services: - www.sa.psu.edu/career
College of Education: - www.ed.psu.edu

Pennsylvania Department of Education
http://www.pde.state.pa.us/ (to home page)
http://www.teaching.state.pa.us/teaching/cwp/view.asp?A=13&Q=32420 (standardized appl.)

US Department of Education:
http://www.ed.gov/index.jsp

Riley Guide: www.rileyguide.com (links to other sites – more higher education than K-12)

PRAXIS http://www.ets.org/praxis/ information site

Financial Assistance

School Districts Across the Nation:
www.asd.com (School Districts by State throughout the Nation)
http://www.nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/ (School Districts across the Nation)
http://www.pa-educator.net/ (apply online at listed School Districts)
http://www.pareap.net/ (PA connection to National Schools Application Network)
http://teachdelaware.com (teaching in DE)
http://www.teachgeorgia.org (teaching in GA)
http://www.pnwboces.org/ (teaching in Lower Hudson Valley, New York)
www.olasjobs.org/capital (teaching in Capital Region, New York)
www.olasjobs.org/mohawk (teaching in Mohawk Valley Region, New York)
www.insideschools.org (teaching in New York City Public Schools)

Education Jobs/General Jobs:
https://www.sa.psu.edu/career/nlr/ (PSU Nittany Lion Career Network)
http://www.employmentspot.com/vocations/education/ (for educational employment, K-12 & Higher Ed)
http://www.academiccareers.com (pre-K through higher education)
http://educationamerica.net (both public, private and charter school positions)
http://www.agentk-12.org/ (both U.S and international positions)
http://www.nationjob.com/education (pre-K through higher education)
http://www.teachers.net/jobs (national job bank)
http://www.teachersatwork.com/ (National Educators Employment Network)
http://www.nemnet.com (National Employment Minority Network, Inc.)

Private Schools/Non-Traditional Routes to Teaching:
www.csa-teach.com (Carney, Sandoe & Assoc-employment agency)
www.petersons.com (Peterson’s Private School Directory)
www.namss.org.uk/ (UK, European & Some International jobsites)
http://www.nais.org/ (listing of independent schools)
http://www.teachforamerica.org (Teach for America program)
http://educationseek.com/schools/Private_Schools/ (helpful site for recent education graduates)

International Jobs:
http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/schools/oteaching.html (Helpful site for teaching overseas)
www.asia-net.com/ (Asia Net)
www.csp.msu.edu (Info on Overseas Teaching Fair sponsored by Michigan State Univ.)
www.ohayosensei.com (Teaching positions in Japan – newsletter)
http://www.jobs.edufind.com/ (Teaching English to speakers of other languages)

Resources for Kids/Teachers:
www.janbrett.com (Website with great ideas for El Ed teachers from author Jan Brett)
http://www.gocitykids.com/ (City Kids Directory)
http://www.ed.gov/index.jsp (Department of Education)
http://www.mste.uiuc.edu/m2t2/resources.html (database for math lessons that incorporate the web)

Higher Education Jobs:
www.naspa.org (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators)
http://www.myacpa.org/index.cfm (American College Personnel Association)
www.aacc.nche.edu (American Association of Community colleges)
http://chronicle.com/chronicle/ (Chronicle of Higher Education Listings)
www.academic360.com (meta collections of Internet resources)
http://www.educause.edu/jobpost (both faculty and administrative positions)
Job Search Log

Keeping accurate records of the districts you have contacted and what your next steps are is important to an effective job search. The form below is provided to assist you in your job search efforts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Contact info</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Next step</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td></td>
<td>Name</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Name</td>
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