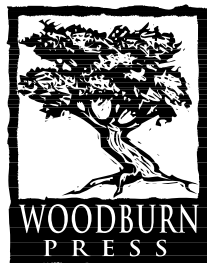


# What Schools Look for in a Teacher

A Guide for Prospective Teachers

by John D. DeCotis, Ed.D.



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# Preface

As prospective teachers, one of your major concerns is getting a job once you graduate from college. As educators, we want to make sure that we have the best and most qualified teachers possible in our classrooms.

This booklet presents an overview of the qualities that schools and school systems look for in the teachers they hire. The author, Dr. John D. DeCotis, is a well-respected educator and superintendent of schools in the Fayette County School System in Fayetteville, Georgia. His insight into what makes a good teacher and his knowledge of the educational system make this book an invaluable resource for prospective teachers.

The information presented in this book will show you how to become the kind of teacher that schools are looking for.



# What Schools Look for in a Teacher

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*“Teachers inspire dreams, shape lives, and give us hope for the future.”* Author Unknown

# Academic Preparation

*Schools are looking for teachers who have a strong preparation in their teaching area, a well-rounded education, good grades, and a record of good standing. Schools are also looking for individuals who have been involved in their school and community.*

## Strong Preparation in Teaching Area

School systems want teachers who are well prepared in their teaching area, whether that be a grade level or a content area.

In order to be able to understand and teach a subject or a grade level, it is essential that teachers be well versed and well prepared in their teaching area. With so much information available through the Internet, teachers must be well prepared in order to effectively teach, guide, and enlighten their students. A teacher's quality of preparation will set the parameters for student learning.

Schools want highly qualified teachers, and now, through the Federal "No Child Left Behind Act," the government requires that all teachers be "highly qualified" in their area(s) of teaching responsibility. If a teacher is not highly qualified, parents must be informed in writing that this is the case. You can ensure that you will be considered "highly qualified" by completing your full program of study, by passing your state certification tests, and by meeting the certification requirements in your state.

*"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."* William Butler Yeats

## **Well-Rounded Education**

As an educator it is important that you be an enlightened person. An enlightened person has a well-round education, is aware of the feelings of others, knowledgeable of various times and places, and familiar with a variety of human experiences.

Having a well-rounded education will make you a more desirable teaching candidate, and it will better prepare you for the teaching profession.

## **Good Grades**

It is important for teaching candidates to have good grades. Good grades reflect a good work ethic, a determination to succeed, and a commitment to quality. Good grades also enable teachers to meet the continuation criteria in their field of study. School systems often see good grades in a teaching candidate as a yardstick of quality assurance.

## **Record of Good Standing**

Teaching candidates need to have “good standing” in all they do. If a student is placed on any kind of probation (academic or otherwise), schools and school systems may view the candidate as a “risk.” They may then conclude that there is a greater potential for things to not work out. Staying in good standing will increase your chances of being hired.



## School and Community Involvement

In addition to having a well-rounded education, it is important for teaching candidates to be involved, well-rounded individuals. Teaching candidates can show they are well-rounded citizens by participating in leadership activities, campus and community organizations, by serving their communities, and by doing volunteer work.

Through community involvement, a teaching candidate can network, form professional relationships, and learn about the role of an educator in the larger community. Experiences in the community also show prospective teachers just how important a quality education is in our society.

Your involvement in community and leadership activities will provide potential employers with a snapshot of your interests, abilities, and of your potential.

