In Michigan, new teachers are being hired every year, but the need is not as critical as elsewhere in the country. There is a critical shortage of teachers in states such as Florida, Virginia, Texas, Nevada, and California, so many of our new teachers go out of state for their first job. (Michigan certification is recognized in most other states.) Others plan ahead by preparing to teach in a high needs district (rural or urban) or earning certification in the subjects where a continuing need exists.

IN MICHIGAN, THERE IS A CRITICAL NEED FOR TEACHERS IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:
(Critical Teacher Shortages for 2009-09, as published by the Michigan Department of Education)

- Special Education
  (all levels and specialties)
- Elementary and/or Secondary fields:
  - Career and Technical Education
  - English as a Second Language
  - Health Sciences
  - Mathematics
  - Information Technology
  - World Languages

Tips for Maximizing Employment Potential

#1: CHOOSE MAJORS AND MINORS WISELY
Certification in at least one of the subjects listed above will increase chances of finding the right job. But teachers should love what they teach, so students should not rule out other subjects. For programs that do not include one of the high-need specialties, tips #2 and #3 below are especially important.

#2: BE FLEXIBLE
Don’t target one specific school district or one specific grade level. Take advantage of opportunities for experience in a variety of settings, and be sure to follow tip #3.

#3: STAND OUT
When there are several candidates for a teaching position, school administrators look beyond certification requirements to the things that distinguish one applicant from the others. Be sure to document any of the following:

- Co-curricular activities. These are experiences you have in addition to your academic program that help you gain experience and enhance your knowledge of what and how children learn. If you expect to teach in Michigan you are strongly advised to build a portfolio of co-curricular activities such as work or volunteer experience in a variety of settings, other community service, and attendance at conferences and workshops for teachers.

- Academic Excellence. In order to meet the high standards being set for teachers today, a candidate must demonstrate a solid background in general education and the subjects he/she teaches, as well as skill in helping students learn.

- Special Skills. Many employers are looking for candidates who have computer, photography, coaching, theater, music or other skills, as potential leaders of student clubs and extra-curricular projects. Spanish or another second language is also an advantage.

- Travel. Students should consider one of the study abroad programs available to teacher education students or spend a summer studying or providing community service in an environment that is different from their home town.

Did you know?
Michigan teachers are among the highest paid in the nation.
Michigan teacher certification is recognized in nearly every state in the country.