

This letter was received in Career Services. It was written by a recruiter from a highly desirable district and was sent to all local colleges and school districts in October 2003. The author received numerous emails from other district recruiters concurring with the identified issues!

Dear All-

I am writing to you to request your assistance with a concern that I have with the appearance of teacher education candidates. During the last year or so, I have noticed that candidates are showing up for interviews dressed rather unprofessionally. I was recently chatting with some colleagues in other districts and they are noticing this too.

I am sure in your roles as career services and placement personnel you are well aware of the impact that appearance has, particularly during the initial interview. I have noticed that some of you actually have this information on your web sites so I know it is important to you as well. Let me say that I am not the kind of person that places sole emphasis on how someone looks. I do, however, expect that candidates will be on time, will be dressed professionally and will speak well. This has not been the case with many of the people I have interviewed during the last year.

I have had numerous candidates show up late- sometimes as much as 30 minutes and not even apologize or offer an excuse. I have had candidates simply not show up. More and more candidates are coming in carrying beverages. If someone has a sore throat and asks if I mind if they have some water with them, that's not a problem but, I don't expect them to come in with a slurpy!

While I clearly understand that styles of clothing have changed and that we're dealing with a different generation of teachers, I do not expect the following:

- denim clothing
- untucked/wrinkled shirts
- sleeveless shirts
- bare legs/bare feet
- corduroy jeans
- multiple piercings- especially the tongue studs
- multiple tattoos
- bare midriffs
- extreme cleavage
- overpowering perfume
- outrageous nails
- micro-mini skirts/shorts

We are interviewing for teachers, people that we expect to be role models for children. I expect that they will come in presentable, professional, neat & clean. The interview is the time you see a candidate at their best. Their manner of dress will in all likelihood become more casual after they are hired. I shudder to think what that would mean for some of these candidates.

I am sure that you counsel many future educators about the interview process. Perhaps you can share this information with education

professors as well so they may reinforce this message. In addition, I am disappointed with the quality of language skills we are seeing. In an era of spell check there is no excuse for misspelled words in application packets. The speaking skills are troubling as well. "Her and I went to a workshop." This is an actual quote from an interview.

Of course we see many outstanding candidates who are very professional and very appropriate. These are the people who get the jobs. Unfortunately some of the candidates that are screened out due to the above concerns might be fine teachers but we will never know if they can't get through the interview.

Any support or assistance that you can share with your students would be greatly appreciated. This seems to be true for candidates coming from all different colleges and universities. Please feel free to call me at XXX-XXX-XXXX if I can answer any questions.

Sincerely,

XXX
Assistant Superintendent
XYZ Central School District