

SWOSU Responding to Teacher Shortage in Oklahoma

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Recent reports and data from the Oklahoma State Department of Education indicate that the state of Oklahoma continues to face teacher shortages in many school districts.

Southwestern Oklahoma State University's Department of Education in Weatherford is working to help those districts with their needs.

Bruce Belanger, coordinator of field experiences, said SWOSU responds to numerous weekly requests by school districts in search of qualified teachers. Many schools have started to offer incentives, such as the use of technology, mileage reimbursement and assistance with housing, for example, to entice teacher candidates to complete their student teaching semester in their schools with the hopes of retaining them as full-time teachers upon graduation.

Other services offered by the SWOSU Department of Education in response to the teacher shortage include hosting an Education Career and Technology Fair each semester. Future dates include March 25 and November 4. The events will be held in the Pioneer Cellular Event Center on the SWOSU campus. Any agencies wishing to participate may register at <http://www.swosu.edu/administration/careers/index.aspx>.

School districts may also post job openings at <http://www.swosu.edu/academics/education/hireSWOSUDOEGrads.aspx>. Job postings are emailed directly to SWOSU graduates and are posted on the Bulldog Job Board and the Department's Facebook page.

Belanger said the Oklahoma City Public Schools began the 2014-15 school year with hundreds of teacher openings. Oklahoma City recruiters have even traveled to Spain and Puerto Rico to recruit teachers to fill openings. Oklahoma State Department of Education data also shows evidence of the teacher shortage severity in Oklahoma as 58% of school districts in Oklahoma have applied for at least one emergency teacher certification in order to cover instructional needs.

Belanger said SWOSU this 2015 spring semester will have its largest group of teacher candidates since 2008.