

Building relationships both in person and online is a great way to connect with other professionals! It also gives you the opportunity to connect with principals and recruiters looking to hire new talent. Sometimes, networking can be overwhelming. Communicating with someone that you do not know can be intimidating. Take a look at these tips to help you gain confidence in your networking skills.

How Can I Use Networking During my Job Search?

✓ **Set goals**

Develop a plan that allows you to capitalize on networking opportunities, and strategize on what you hope to accomplish on a weekly basis. For example: plan to attend one networking event within the next two weeks, request three professional contacts via social media (i.e. LinkedIn) over the course of the next 72 hours, and follow-up with two connections you have within the next week.

✓ **Be proactive**

Whether you are networking online or in-person, make sure you always introduce yourself. Ask open ended questions, and pay attention to the answers. This will allow you to listen before responding with something of value to that person. Have copies of your resume on hand, and don't be afraid to leave one with a new contact.

✓ **Remember to follow up**

It's critical that you maintain the relationships you create. Do not send the same email and/or contact request to each person you meet. Instead, take the time to personalize your outreach; making a reference to something from the conversation you had will help you stand out.

✓ **Find a balance between patience and persistence**

If you don't hear back from a contact you made within 48 hours of your follow-up, don't stress out. Give them more time to get back to you. If two weeks have gone by, and you haven't received a response, then it's completely appropriate to reach out again. Don't forget to be respectful of people's schedules.

How Can I Continue to Network Throughout my Career?

✓ **Invest in professional development networks**

Spend time actively participating in professional communities both online and in-person. Find people who are like-minded. You never know who you might meet, and the impact that person will have on your career.

✓ **Help fellow educators**

Continue the networking cycle by providing support to those looking for it. Think about what you can give. Inviting someone to visit your classroom, or offering to connect them with someone you know is a great way to meaningful connections.