

# GRAB

## Learning about teaching

About 1 million new teaching jobs will be created between 1998 and 2008, according to the latest employment projections from BLS. What will it take to qualify for those jobs?

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) clearinghouse, a program of the National Library of Education and the U.S. Department of Education, offers free information cards for people interested in becoming elementary or secondary school teachers. Each information card explains one aspect of starting a teaching career and lists additional resources. Topics include choosing a teacher education program, finding financial aid, alternative routes to certification, looking for a job, and teaching internationally.

To order a set of nine cards, call 1 (800) 822-9229 or write the ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education, 1307 New York Ave. NW., Suite 300, Washington, DC 20005-4701. An online version of the cards is available at [http://](http://www.ericsp.org/digests/infocards.html)

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Another Department of Education publication, *What to Expect Your First Year of Teaching*, recounts the experiences of individual teachers and offers advice from the field. This free booklet was compiled from interviews with beginning teachers. Call the Education Department at 1 (877) 433-7827 to order the 43-page booklet, or read it online at <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FirstYear>.

## Suggestions welcome

Do you have an item for the Grab Bag? Send it to Olivia Crosby, PSB 2135, 2 Massachusetts Ave. NE., Washington, DC 20212. Fax (202) 691-5745; e-mail: [ooqinfo@bls.gov](mailto:ooqinfo@bls.gov).

## Local earnings data available from BLS

Earnings vary widely by location; just ask any jobseeker with wanderlust. Now, BLS offers more earnings data about specific locations. Data from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey are available for 339 metropolitan areas, in addition to the State and the National data already published.

The OES survey covers about 700 occupations, gathering data on total employment, average annual wage, average hourly wage, and median hourly wage. For example, according to the OES survey, 3,760 electrical and electronic engineers were employed in Denver in 1997, with average annual earnings of \$53,190. But in Savannah, Georgia, 340 electrical and electronic engineers were employed, and their average annual earnings were \$46,660. For more earnings data, go to <http://stats.bls.gov/oes/msa/oessrch1.htm>.

The data in the OES survey are overall occupational averages and do not account for differences in job duties within an occupation; earnings of an electrical engineer who has many responsibilities are averaged with earnings of an engineer who has few responsibilities. For earnings data separated by work level, see the National Compensation Survey. This survey covers fewer occupations at fewer locations and only those establishments with more than 50 employees, but it gathers data for each work level within an occupation. For more information about the National Compensation survey, go to <http://stats.bls.gov/compub.htm>.

# BAG

## Stress illnesses keep workers home

Many workers experience occasional work-related stress. But sometimes, stress rises to the level of an occupational illness. Stress-induced mental or emotional disorders caused 3,418 workers to miss work in 1997, according to BLS data. The median absence was 23 days, four times the median for all nonfatal illnesses or injuries.

Which occupations were at highest risk? Not surprisingly, managerial and professional occupations, which are often associated with stressful working conditions, accounted for 16 percent of the cases. But stress affects disparate occupations: Bookkeepers, accounting, and auditing clerks accounted for 5 percent of all cases, the largest percentage of cases for any detailed occupation; sales supervisors and proprietors, cooks, and production occupation supervisors each accounted for 4 percent.

The good news is that the number of occupational stress illnesses is declining. The 1997 levels are the lowest recorded since BLS started collecting these data in 1992.



## Want a college degree? Mind your high school coursework

A rigorous high school curriculum and continuous college enrollment are the strongest indicators that a student who attends college will complete a bachelor's degree. That finding is from a study published in 1999 by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

The study cites, for example, that finishing another high school math course after Algebra II more than doubles the odds that a student will complete a college degree. The effect of high school curriculum is even more pronounced among black and Hispanic students. The number of colleges attended has no effect on completion; however, taking fewer than 20 credits during the first calendar year of college reduces the likelihood of eventual completion, as does the need to take remedial classes.

The study looks at completion without regard to institution or year-to-year persistence and uses several new variables. Call 1 (800) 4EDPUBS (433-7827) to request a free copy of "Answers in the Tool Box: Academic Intensity, Attendance Patterns, and Bachelor's Degree Attainment," by Clifford Adelman. It is also available online at <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Toolbox>.

## Educational reimbursement on the rise

Compared to a few years ago, you probably have a better chance today of getting your employer to pay for courses you take. More than one-third of employers have enhanced their educational reimbursement programs since 1993, according to a study conducted by the management consulting firm Hewitt Associates.

Hewitt surveyed 460 companies in 1998 and found that 75 percent paid for job-related courses and 23 percent paid for courses unrelated to the job. In 1998, the median dollar limit for reimbursements was \$3,000 a year, compared to \$2,000 in 1993. But these benefits came with obligations. Sixty-three percent of employers required employees to earn a grade of C or better. Moreover, while about 33 percent of the companies offered educational benefits to new hires, the majority imposed a service requirement.

According to BLS, 67 percent of employees in large and medium establishments received job-related educational assistance from their employers in 1997. For more data on employee benefits, see the OOChart in the summer 1999 issue of the OOO, available online at <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/1999/summer/oochart.pdf>.