

PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
FOR TEACHERS

Dodging the Dreaded Pink Slip

Top 5 Tips for
Surviving the Recession

Five tips for teachers to survive the recession

School district administrators are sharpening their red pencils for the third straight year to determine how and where to make the next round of budget cuts.

While some teachers are lying low, hoping not to be noticed, others are standing up and standing out. They are taking the initiative to be recognized for the added value they bring to their students, their school and their district.

Now is the time for teachers to start thinking about the future and taking steps to insure that they have the skills necessary to hold onto their existing jobs or move into new ones.

Teachers can strengthen their bargaining positions through education, engagement and initiative. Here are a few tips for teachers who want to reinvent themselves and, in the process, survive the recession.

The State of Teaching in California Today – By the Numbers:

You are most likely very aware of the state of teaching today in California, but here's a look of what is going on in today's economy along with a look forward, by the numbers.

More than **20,000** public school teachers in California opened their mailboxes in March to find a pink slip inside as districts met the state's deadline for dispensing the dreaded news to the educators that they may not have a job in the fall.

(According to the San Francisco Chronicle, March 16, 2012).

**Source: California Department of Education*

The percentage of California teachers with master's degree or above in 2011 was **41%.** *

Only **1.2%** of California teachers were National Board Certified in 2007, according to the most recent available data. *

33,000 is the anticipated number of new science and mathematics teachers needed in the next ten years in California.

(Estimated by the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning and the California Council on Science and Technology in 2007.)

Even if every student who graduates with a math or science degree decided to teach, it would take **10** years to meet the demand.

(According to the California Senate Research Office.)

Two Important Credentials that Could Help Save Your Job

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate for **Cross-Cultural Language and Academic Development (CLAD)** is for teachers who need this certification to teach English learners in California public schools program. It can be completed online, typically in six months. [Learn more.](#)

Specially Designed Academic Instruction Delivered in English (SDAIE) is an approach to teaching academic courses to English Learner students, in English. It is designed for non-native speakers of English and focuses on increasing the comprehensibility of the academic courses typically provided to Fluent English Proficient (FEP) and English-only students. It requires a single, online course specifically designed to obtain Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) clearance for SDAIE Authorization when teaching English Learners. [Learn more.](#)

1] Bolster your credentials

While teacher layoffs typically are determined by seniority, teachers in high demand fields like math and science are less likely to be laid off than teachers with a Multiple-Subject Teaching Credential.

When doing layoffs, most districts apply “tie-breaking criteria,” such as whether teachers have authorization to teach English Language Learners or possess multiple credentials, which sets them apart from other teachers.

Many elementary school teachers who were at risk of being laid off have been able to keep their jobs or move to new positions in middle school after earning a subject-matter authorization in math, science or technology. These authorizations allow teachers with multiple-subject or single-subject credentials to teach those subjects through ninth grade. Most authorization programs can be completed in one year or less.

English and history teachers, who are passionate about their own subject matter, might consider enrolling in a certificate program to teach high school Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Teaching Advanced Placement courses is a demanding assignment for an instructor because the courses are comparable to a freshman college course. While certificates are not currently required, the programs provide teachers with the content knowledge, teaching skills, leadership approaches, and instructional strategies for teaching AP classes.

Veteran, tenured teachers can be at risk losing their jobs because they don't have their state-mandated Cross-Cultural Language and Academic Development (CLAD) or Specially Designed Academic Instruction Delivered in English (SDAIE) certificates. Both certificate programs teach strategies for assisting students who are learning English.

2] Develop and demonstrate your leadership abilities



Leadership, a critical skill in any organization, is the ability to motivate a group of people toward a common goal. Teachers are increasingly being tapped to take on leadership roles in their schools. For example, they may be called upon to fill gaps left by vice principals and other administrators who have had their positions eliminated due to budget cuts.

There are many ways teachers can develop their skills as leaders. Abundant workshops, courses, and study materials are available to help teachers develop the skills they need to be a leader in a 21st century education system. As an added bonus, they will learn to be better teachers because leadership skills naturally translate into more effective classroom teaching.

Teacher leadership skills include:

- **Meeting Strategies:** Effective teacher leaders need to be able to engage and encourage their peers to participate in meetings. Facilitation training and learning how to deploy communication skills and team engagement tools can be a plus.
- **Coaching:** Effective teacher leaders need to know how to motivate peers to find the answers within themselves and to encourage alternative solutions. Abundant problem-solving tools and techniques are available and can be learned and used to coach other and demonstrate leadership abilities.
- **Team Building:** Effective teacher leaders need to build a sense of camaraderie among peers as they work together to address challenges and celebrate successes. By examining and leveraging skills and strategies to more effectively influence others, teachers can help build strong teams and improve the leadership qualities in themselves and others.
- **Mentoring:** Experienced teachers need to take the initiative and find opportunities to mentor less experienced teachers. This allows them to demonstrate their leadership abilities and willingness to step up, help others and strengthen their school's faculty and overall system. Less experienced teachers can find mentors to help them develop critical leadership skills.

There are many networking and mentoring groups to help teachers either be a mentor or find a mentor, such as a Professional Learning Network (PLN). With the availability of the Internet, teachers can connect with mentoring groups and other teachers all around the world.

The leadership skills gained through mentoring and the networking experiences will also prove to be invaluable to those teachers who are let go.

Resources for Networking and Mentoring:

The Educator's PLN: The personal learning network for educators.

This is a ning site dedicated to the support of a Personal Learning Network for Educators.

[Read more.](#)

The Impact of Mentoring on Our Professional Learning

by Theresa London Cooper at TeachersNetwork.org

“One of the smartest things I’ve ever done as a learner was to surround myself with knowledgeable and wise people who are passionate about the teaching profession.”

[Read more.](#)

3] Get involved – Volunteer for assignments

Some of the most invaluable people on a school campus are those who go above and beyond to help ensure that students have a well-rounded experience inside and outside the classroom. Volunteering can be a very rewarding experience and has untold benefits for the students, the school and the community.

On-campus athletic coaches benefit the school and the students. Not everyone can be the head football coach. Just as there are many levels of players, there are many levels of coaches. Teachers may volunteer to fill a need as an assistant or substitute coach.

Actively involved volunteers are needed in many different areas of a school. Administrators like to say to parents that there are after-school clubs that their students take advantage of. They will think twice before letting go teachers who are giving of their time to help students. Teachers who have a passion for public speaking might start a debate team. Advisors are always needed to oversee the yearbook or the drama or French clubs.

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Volunteer to work on school-level or district-level committees. Or, be a representative on the School Site Council, the PTA or the local Education Foundation. Volunteering with the PTA, within the community and other organizations gives teachers the chance to interact with school system leadership, with parents, and their broader communities.

Teachers who are involved have ample opportunities to be visible and demonstrate their shared interest in their students. They show they are committed to making contributions by volunteering for the betterment of their students and their communities.

The Importance of Extracurricular Activities for Teachers

Extracurricular activities, programs that take place outside of the classroom, require teacher supervision and sponsorship. While some teachers are paid for their participation in extracurricular activities, many are not. Although the lack of pay for valuable time spent managing an extracurricular activity may deter a teacher from taking on such a task, these programs are important to teachers for several reasons:

Professional Growth: When teachers offer extracurricular activities at school, they provide themselves the opportunity for professional growth. As they plan, establish, and supervise programs, they learn new skills in the process, such as organization, collaboration and grant writing.

Program Growth: Teachers often create programs which require extensive student participation, such as debate, theater, band, and sport-related programs. These extracurricular activities have the potential to grow and garner student enthusiasm and parental and community support.

Growth in Support: As extracurricular activities at school become more popular, teachers normally gain support from the community, parents, and the administration. This is important for program longevity and success, and success of the extracurricular activity directly relates to the personal growth of the teacher.

Personal Growth: The personal growth of teachers is important to teachers because personal and professional growth are connected. Personal satisfaction and professional accomplishments serve to build self-confidence and self-esteem, resulting in teachers who can overcome obstacles and provide strong leadership in the classroom and beyond.

Source: Patrice Lesco, eHow Contributor and certified teacher.

[Learn more at.](#)

4] Embrace technology

Today's educators need to be technologically savvy to keep up with the demands of a rapidly evolving education system and to keep up with their students. Unfortunately, many school districts have dismantled their technology training programs and trimmed their IT staff as a result of budget cuts.

But, don't be deterred. Many programs are available to help teachers learn to use technology effectively in the classroom.

The effective use of technology extends beyond preparing a PowerPoint presentation or sending emails. An array of technology learning tools – SMARTboards, iPods, iPads, netbooks, laptops, digital cameras and flip videos – are all part of a teacher's technology toolkit.

Tech-savvy teachers also are knowledgeable about education resources on the Internet that can enhance learning in their classrooms. Today, teachers who effectively integrate technology into their teaching strategies become models among their peers and the go-to person on campus for tech-related questions and resources.

Teachers who become the technology experts at their schools can demonstrate that they are invaluable in today's technology driven world. By being the go-to tech teacher, these teachers can show other teachers how to do stuff with their computers and set themselves apart as leaders. They also may be viewed as too valuable to let go when the pink slips are handed out.

“Once a Teacher...” Blog – A Wealth of Information

As a teacher, social networking plays a huge role in this by allowing you to build your own Personal Learning Network. Kate Klingensmith, a former teacher, started a blog called “Once a Teacher...” to help teachers understand and use some of the social media and other Internet-based tools available today. Here are some links of interest to get you started in exploring web technologies to use in your classroom or to share with other teachers in your school:

PLN: Your Personal Learning Network Made Easy

by Kate Klingensmith, at Once a Teacher. [Learn more.](#)

Using Weebly to build your Classroom Website

by Kate Klingensmith, at Once a Teacher. [Learn more.](#)

Ten Free Web 2.0 Tools for the Classroom

by Karen Schweitzer, guest poster. [Learn more.](#)

20 Online Tools to Make Learning Fun

by Karen Schweitzer, guest poster. [Learn more.](#)

A Teacher's Guide to Twitter

By Kate Klingensmith, at Once a Teacher. [Learn more.](#)

5] Invest in yourself and your future

Education is a dynamic process. The best teachers are those who know that their education doesn't end with a teaching credential, it's only just beginning. Teachers, who take the initiative to improve their skills and knowledge, are bound to get noticed.

Teachers at any level can benefit from taking college courses in their respective field to enhance their knowledge and stay up-to-date on the latest research and developments.

A master's degree not only improves a teacher's employability, it also rewards them with higher salaries in recognition of their continuing education.

Some teachers take their career to the next level by earning their National Board Certification. National Board Certified teachers typically show significant improvement in their teaching and their students make dramatic gains on achievement tests.

The process involves a course of study, expert evaluation, self assessment and peer review over a period of one to three years. Some districts provide financial support and salary incentives for teachers, who pursue National Board Certification.

Make the Commitment: Become a National Board Certified Teacher

Join the ranks of the nation's most accomplished teachers who help students develop the necessary skills to thrive in school, in the workplace and in the 21st century global economy. National Board Certification is part of the growing education reform movement that is advancing student learning, improving teaching and making schools better. Teachers who achieve National Board Certification have met high standards through study, expert evaluation, self-assessment and peer review.

Benefits of National Board Certification

Helps students succeed.

Research, including the 2008 Congressionally-mandated National Research Council report, documents that students taught by NBCTs make higher gains on achievement tests than students taught by non-NBCTs.

Advances careers. Certification provides routes for NBCTs to advance as master teachers, school leaders and mentors without leaving the classroom.

Provides portability. Many states recognize National Board Certification as sufficient proof for state licensure, allowing movement from state to state.

Offers higher salary potential. Many states and hundreds of local districts offer salary incentives for teachers who certify.

[Learn more about](#) becoming a National Board Certified Teacher.

What to Do if You Get a Pink Slip.

If you've done all you can to recession proof yourself, and you still get laid off, don't despair. Once the economy turns around, experts are predicting a shortage of teachers because Baby Boomers are retiring, and fewer people are going into the profession.

In the meantime, here are some tips for you in the event you receive the dreaded pink slip:

- 1. Leave on a good note.** Get references right away. Don't put it off.
- 2. Stay positive.** Remember that layoffs aren't personal, although they often feel like they are. Being upset is normal, but if you need to vent, do so with close friends, family or a therapist outside of work.
- 3. Talk to your local education association.** Find out whether your school district handled the layoff process correctly, and make sure you understand your rights. What are your chances of being recalled, and what priority do you have for applying for other openings in your district?
- 4. Don't put off being realistic with your finances and your own personal budget.** Speak with creditors and research benefits you may be entitled to. Many people feel a sense of shame, and try to hide the news of a layoff from their creditors or just "tough it out." Big mistake. You may be able to renegotiate your payment plans or even defer some payments.
- 5. Get your portfolio and other key documents in order.** It's time to get all important documents in order. Gather transcripts, ESP or teaching certifications, letters of recommendation, commendations, statement of teaching philosophy, unique lesson plans, and anything else that will help establish your qualifications.
- 6. Establish a job hunt schedule.** You need to treat your job search like a job itself. Make a list of things you want to accomplish each day, whether it involves networking, phone calls, adding to your portfolio, or submitting applications.

- 7. Engage your professional network.** When it comes to job hunting, you don't need to go it alone. Often the best way to find another job is to network aggressively with friends and colleagues, who know what a good teacher or support professional you are. Spread the word about your job search to your Facebook friends. Consider posting a profile on LinkedIn, which is designed to keep you in touch with professional contacts.
- 8. Check education and association job boards.** There are many public and private Web sites that post school district jobs. NEA state affiliates often link to job boards directly from their Web sites. Visit your state affiliate Web site for the job openings and resources in your state.
- 9. Consider adding to your skill set.** Perhaps you've thought for years about pursuing dual certification or adding new skills, but kept putting it off. Dual certification takes time and may not help with your current situation -- but it may leave you better prepared for the future.
- 10. Prepare aggressively for your interview.** Your portfolio or resume is strong and includes great recommendations. You've job hunted and networked, and you've landed an interview. Now, you need to do everything you can to make sure it goes well. Never go in cold. Go to the interview with a list of five strengths you want to cover in the interview. You know what your strengths are – go in with a plan to communicate them.

Source: Based on an article from the [National Education Association](#) website:

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