

CHAPTER TEN

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Teaching high school physics...

A Career in Physics Teaching?

There is a strong, persistent, and growing demand for good middle and high school science teachers in Illinois and across the nation. Many teaching positions will go unfilled unless more individuals decide to pursue this career. According to the U.S. Department of Education, within the next ten years half of all current school teachers will have to be replaced due to retirement and transfers. Science teaching in Illinois will be similarly impacted. You can make a difference by becoming a middle or high school science teacher.

Seven good reasons to become a science teacher:

IMPACT

Teaching science will allow you to help middle and high school students learn science knowledge and understand how to solve problems and think critically. You can play an important role in students' education and have a positive impact on their lives.

RESPECT

Science teaching demands creativity and hard work. Many teachers have the freedom to develop their own course content and instructional methods. As a teacher committed to students and their learning, you'll be recognized for your expertise and positive influence.

FLEXIBILITY

A teacher's work schedule is punctuated with a number of break periods each year. Teaching often provides an extended time for rest and relaxation, special trips, and a variety of exciting professional development opportunities open only to teachers. This is something that few other professions provide.

SATISFACTION

Science teachers have many “toys,” so teaching can be a fun and rewarding profession. You’ll spend much of your time dealing with and teaching interesting natural phenomena. While the work associated with teaching is at times difficult, satisfaction the effort brings is considered by many to be worth more than money.

SECURITY

Science teachers are in high demand across the country, and this leads to excellent job security. Teaching certificates issued by Illinois have “reciprocity” with about 40 other states. You can teach almost anywhere in the nation.

LEARNING

Teaching a subject is one of the best ways to learn it. As you teach, you’ll learn much about the content of science in particular and the processes and nature of science in general. This is a rewarding experience that benefits both teacher and students.

INCOME

Teaching even at entry-level can be financially rewarding. Science teachers with Bachelor’s degrees typically earn \$30,000 to \$50,000 per school year. Salaries often rise rapidly. In large cities, and after earning a Master’s degree, teachers sometimes make more than \$100,000 per year as they approach retirement! In addition, there are many job benefits ranging from medical, dental, and life insurance, to tuition reimbursement for graduate courses and great retirement plans.

What are the job prospects for a new science teacher?

In a single word – excellent! Check out details in the United States Department of Labor’s *Occupational Outlook Handbook*.

www.bls.gov/oco/

How much do teachers make in my area? What are the benefits? Do school districts offer hiring bonuses?

Use *Salary Wizard* to find out about your financial prospects as an Illinois science teacher. Check it out at *Salary.com*.

www.salary.com

Where can I find out more about a career in science teaching?

Start by talking with your science teacher. Because every teacher and each setting is different, you can get an even wider perspective on science teaching by visiting the ISAAPT “teach” website.

www.isaapt.org/teach/

What does it take to become a good science teacher?

Teaching demands more than just caring about students and knowing one's subject well. Teachers need to know what motivates students, how to diagnose their strengths and weaknesses, and how to create environments in which they can learn.

Altruism – Good teachers are dedicated to their students and their learning. The best science teachers will educate the whole student.

Interest – In order to teach well, science teachers should find their subject matter interesting.

Understanding - In addition to knowing the content of science well, teachers need to have a proper understanding of the nature and history of science.

Ability – Good science teaching requires that science teachers not only be able to solve textbook problems, but be good experimentalists as well.

Effort – Being a good science teacher requires hard but rewarding work – from preparing to become a teacher to actually doing the work of teaching.

Do you have what it takes to be among the best and brightest teachers in the nation?

How can I become a science teacher?

To become a science teacher, you'll need to complete a Bachelor's Degree in science teacher education. This will take about four years. You will study subjects such as biology, chemistry, earth & space science, environmental science, and physics as well as mathematics. You'll take courses in science teaching methods and professional education. Science teacher education programs exist throughout Illinois that can help you become the science teacher you want to be. To learn more about these institutions, visit the Website of the Illinois Section of the American Association of Physics Teachers at www.isaapt.org/teach/.

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