



EAB

MARKET RESEARCH BRIEF

# Market Viability of an Online **Master of Arts in Teaching**

Employer Demand for Teaching Professionals in the  
Pacific Northwest

# COE Forum

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# 1) Research Methodology

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**Project Challenge** Leadership at a member institution approached the Forum as they considered launching an online Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program. Through a combination of qualitative interviews with administrators of teaching programs, and quantitative data analytics, the Forum sought to assess the market viability of an online MAT program at the requesting institution.

EAB's market research function provides insights which guide strategic programmatic decisions at member institutions. The Forum combines qualitative and quantitative data to help administrators identify opportunities for new program development, assess job market trends, and align curriculum with employer and student demand.

EAB reports rely primarily on labor market data from the Burning Glass Labor/Insight™ tool (description below). Reports occasionally use data from the United States Census Bureau and United States Bureau of Labor Statistics data to explore occupation and job trends. Market research reports may also incorporate Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data to assess student enrollment, demographics, and completion rates across competitor programs.

**Methodology and Definitions**

**Methodology:** Unless stated otherwise, this report includes data from online job postings from July 2014 to June 2015. The Forum identified the top titles, skills, and employers nationwide and in the Pacific Northwest.

**Definitions:** The terms "Pacific Northwest," "regional," and "regional data" refer to the states of California, Oregon, and Washington.

Annual growth in job postings is measured in the change between January 2010 and December 2014 by six-month halves (i.e., 2012 H2 is July 2012 to December 2012).

**Burning Glass Labor/Insight™**

**EAB's Partner for Real-Time Labor Market Data**

This report includes data made available through EAB's partnership with Burning Glass Technologies, a Boston-based leader in human capital data analytics. Burning Glass Technologies specializes in the use of web spidering technology to mine more than 80 million online job postings and analyze real-time employer demand. Under this partnership, EAB may use Burning Glass's proprietary Labor/Insight™ tool to answer member questions about employer demand for educational requirements, job titles, and competencies over time, as well as by geography. The tool considers job postings "unspecified" for a skill, industry, employer, geography, certification, or educational requirement when the job posting did not advertise for one of these particular job characteristics. Unspecified postings represent null values and should be excluded from the total number (n value) of job postings analyzed in the query. A more complete description of the tool is available at <http://www.burning-glass.com/products/laborinsight-market-analysis/>.

For more information about the Labor/Insight™ tool, please contact Kelly Bailey, Business Development Manager, at [kbailey@burning-glass.com](mailto:kbailey@burning-glass.com) or 732-800-2484.

## Project Sources

The Forum consulted the following sources for this report:

- EAB's internal and online research libraries  
[www.eab.com](http://www.eab.com)
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)  
<http://nces.ed.gov>
- Academic Program Websites

## Profiled Institutions

The Forum interviewed administrators of master's-level teaching programs at the following institutions:

### A Guide to Institutions Profiled in this Brief<sup>1</sup>

Institution	Location	Approximate Institutional Enrollments (Undergraduate/Total)	Classification
Institution A	Midwest (City; Midsize)	15,600 / 16,600	Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)
Institution B	South (Town; Remote)	10,000 / 11,000	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)
Institution C	West (City; Large)	20,500 / 23,200	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)
Institution D	Southwest (City; Small)	23,300 / 27,700	Research Universities (high research activity)
Institution E	Northwest (Suburb; Midsize)	5,400 / 6,000	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)

1) National Center for Education Statistics.

## 2) Executive Overview

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### Key Observations

**Employer demand for teaching professionals with master’s degrees in the Pacific Northwest increased 81 percent from July 2013 to June 2015, indicating an opportunity for the requesting institution to create an online MAT program.** Increased demand in the region suggests the requesting institution should also authorize the online MAT program in Washington and California to attract more students. Employer demand analysis reveals that employer demand in the state of Oregon increased at an even faster rate than regional employer demand; employers in Oregon sought 171 percent more teaching professionals with master’s degrees in H1 2015 than in H2 2013. Oregon employer demand also rose steadily in the past year and a half; employers have posted more jobs each successive half since H2 2013.

**Include subject-specific concentrations or endorsements to differentiate the online MAT program at the requesting institution.** Many existing MAT programs do not offer concentrations, or offer a limited number (e.g., special education, reading). Some programs offer endorsements instead of concentrations, in which a student takes a set number of courses to have a statement appear on his or her teaching license that indicates the ability to teach a given subject or level, such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Regional employers frequently post jobs with subject- or level-specific titles (e.g., ‘math teacher’), indicating a need for specialized teaching professionals. Offer concentrations or endorsements to attract more students and improve graduates’ employment prospects in the region.

**Require fieldwork or professional application of lessons learned in the program to ensure students can effectively implement elements of the MAT curriculum.** MAT programs exist to train new teachers and improve the abilities of existing teachers. To that end, all profiled MAT programs require or encourage fieldwork or applied research that MAT students can employ in their classrooms. While traditional programs require student teaching, programs like the science-specific MAT at **Institution D**, which only accepts certified teachers, require students to complete a capstone project that produces a shareable resource, like a curriculum. Administrators at the requesting institution should require fieldwork or professional application to ensure MAT program graduates’ effectiveness in the classroom.

**Offer teaching certification through the online MAT program to increase enrollments.** Not all MAT programs offer teaching certification; some require applicants to hold a teaching certification to be admitted. Programs that offer certification may enroll students directly from undergraduate programs or adults looking to change professions. Online programs that offer certification must consider the different regulations for teacher certification in individual states.

## 3) Master of Arts in Teaching Program Characteristics

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### Program Modality

#### Offer the MAT Program in an Online or Hybrid Format to Attract More Students

Online program delivery offers prospective MAT students greater flexibility and increases the number of students who can enroll, since working adults can take classes according to their schedules. Many online MAT programs also include residency sessions or synchronous online course sessions. The requesting institution should offer the MAT program in an online or hybrid format to appeal to students with work schedules or personal commitments that prevent them from attending a traditional program.

Administrators at **Institution E** developed a hybrid MAT program in response to demand from local students whose schedules prevented them from participation in the one-year face-to-face MAT program. In the hybrid format, students complete online courses and also meet at one of the institution's satellite campus one night each week and one Saturday each month for the first year. Students complete field placements in the second year of the program.

Contacts at Institution E report that not only does the hybrid program represent a more flexible option for prospective students but it also costs students less and gives them more time to process course material. Contacts explain that students understand program material better because they take online courses at their own pace in-between the program's in-person class sessions.



#### Offer an Accelerated Track for Students with Advanced Content Knowledge

Administrators at **Institution B** offer two MAT program tracks; administrators offer all courses in both tracks online. Both tracks begin with a two-day summer intensive focused on classroom management. Students also meet in-person one Saturday a month throughout their practicum year.

In the first, accelerated track, students with sufficient content knowledge in a given area (e.g., Spanish, chemistry) may earn teaching certification while teaching. A student with a master's degree in chemistry enters the classroom immediately as a chemistry teacher. Program faculty members observe this teacher throughout the year to evaluate his or her progress.

In the traditional MAT format, students enter the classroom after taking their MAT courses, and program administration pairs each student with a mentor-teacher to observe.

### Offer Teacher Certification via the MAT Program to Enroll Students Directly from Undergraduate Programs

Some profiled online MAT programs do not include teaching certification in program curricula due to the different requirements for certification in each state. Programs that offer certification may enroll more students directly from undergraduate education or other professions, however, since students do not need teaching certification to enter the program. Administrators at the requesting institution should offer certification (i.e., Initial I Teaching License) through the online MAT program to increase enrollments from recent college graduates. Faculty members who teach in online programs that include certification assist with student field work placement.

Administrators at **Institution C** require all MAT program applicants to hold teaching certification to be admitted. Administrators at **Institution D** similarly require program applicants to be certified teachers due to the program's focus on content mastery.

### Require Fieldwork to Ensure MAT Students can Apply Program Lessons in the Classroom

All profiled MAT programs that lead to certification require students to complete fieldwork, and programs that do not lead to certification still encourage students to complete applied research or other work they can apply in the classroom. Contacts note MAT programs exist to prepare teachers for the classroom or improve their teaching abilities, and practical experience represents a crucial aspect of that training. Administrators at the requesting institution should include a professional application or fieldwork component in the MAT program to ensure students can implement what they learn in their own classrooms.

Administrators at **Institution C** note the MAT program's online format facilitates individualized student learning. This format also allows for the professional application of curriculum content. Students in Institution C's MAT program may complete an action learning thesis or project in which they choose a research topic and test hypotheses within that topic in the classroom. For example, in a project on cooperative learning in heterogeneous groups, a student might test theories on how to structure learning groups to maximize student involvement. Students who do not choose to complete action research must take a cumulative final exam. Contacts report one third of students choose action research.

Administrators at **Institution E** require all students to complete fieldwork. Though students do not need teaching certification to enter the program, all students must have experience working with children to be admitted.



#### Shareable Capstone Projects Benefit More than the Individual Student

Administrators at **Institution D** only enroll certified teachers in the science-specific MAT program, so the program does not include a fieldwork requirement. Instead, teachers enrolled in the program must complete a thesis or capstone project. Capstone projects must be shareable; examples include a curriculum, a sequence of professional development modules, and an article to be published in a practitioner journal. Contacts report 75 percent of students in the program choose the non-thesis option.

## Include ESOL Endorsement in the MAT Curriculum to Attract Students and Meet Employer Demand

An endorsement appears on a teacher’s teaching license and indicates his or her authorization to teach a specific subject or grade level. Administrators at the requesting institution should include endorsements in high-demand topic areas or grade levels (e.g., ESOL, elementary education) in the MAT program curriculum to meet regional employer demand for teachers certified in the endorsement areas and attract students who seek those credentials.

Though the MAT program at **Institution E** does not include concentrations, students in the two-year hybrid MAT program may earn additional endorsements in ESOL and reading. Administrators offer both endorsements entirely online, though students may also earn the ESOL endorsement face-to-face in a summer intensive. Contacts report the institution decided to offer an ESOL endorsement following the state’s decision to require all teachers to obtain ESOL endorsement. Students in the one-year, face-to-face MAT program at the institution cannot earn these endorsements. Administrators at **Institution A** offer concentrations in special education and special reading, but only face-to-face MAT students can enroll in these concentrations.

### Attributes of Profiled Master’s-Level Teaching Programs

Institution	Required Credit Hours	Cost	Delivery Format	Includes Certification
<b>Institution D</b>	30 credit hours	\$674 per credit hour*	Online and face-to-face	X
<b>Institution C</b>	33 credit hours	\$3,800 per academic year	Online	X
<b>Institution E</b>	33-35 credit hours	\$5,385 per academic year	Hybrid and face-to-face	✓
<b>Institution A</b>	36 credit hours	\$375 per credit hour**	Online and face-to-face	X
<b>Institution B</b>	36 credit hours	\$579 per credit hour	Online and face-to-face	✓

\*This rate applies to out-of-state online students only  
 \*\*This rate applies to online students only

## Commonly Sought Skills

### Include a Math Concentration in the MAT Program to Satisfy Regional Employer Demand

Employers in the Pacific Northwest sought teaching professionals with 'mathematics' skills most often last year; job postings that identify 'mathematics' as a desired skill compose 12 percent of all relevant postings. 'Mathematics' represents the only subject-specific skill on the list of skills regional employers seek most frequently. The requesting institution should include a math teaching concentration or endorsement within the MAT program to meet regional employer demand for teaching professionals with 'mathematics' skills. Special education represents another potential concentration for the MAT program; four percent of all relevant job postings list 'special education' as a desired skill.

Faculty members at the requesting institution should confer leadership skills in the MAT program to better prepare graduates for employment in the region. Employers in the Pacific Northwest demonstrate high demand for leadership and development skills among teaching professionals with master's degrees. Commonly sought leadership and development skills include 'collaboration,' 'staff development,' 'workshops,' and 'mentoring.'

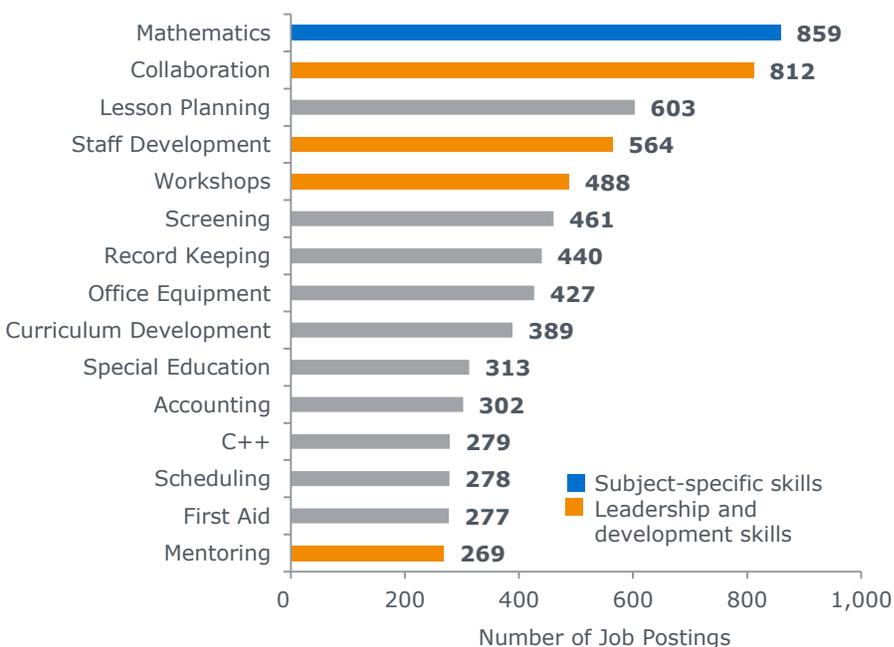
#### Advertise Leadership Skills to Increase Enrollments

Administrators at **Institution D** report they emphasize leadership in program marketing to attract more students, since the institution's home state offers little financial incentive for teachers to earn master's degrees. Without financial incentive, teachers need other reasons (e.g., improving leadership skills) to enroll in master's programs.

### Top Skills for Teaching Professionals in the Pacific Northwest

July 2014-June 2015, Regional Data, Graduate Degree Preferred or Required<sup>2</sup>

n=7,122 job postings, 1,486 unspecified postings



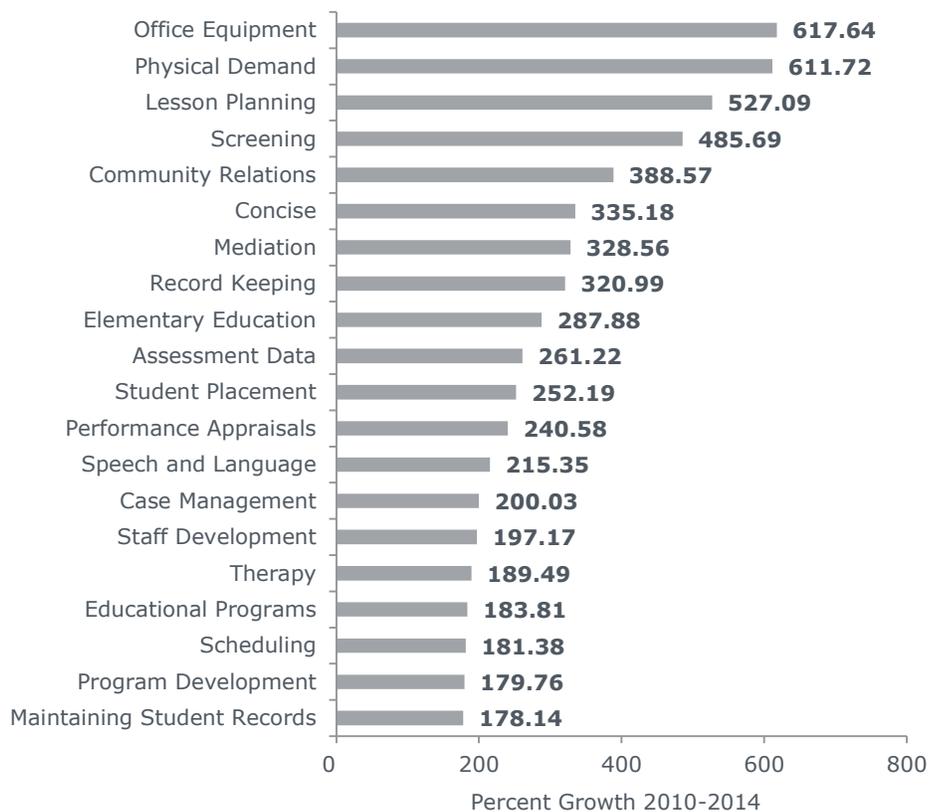
## Employers Demonstrate Increased Demand for Lesson Planning and Community Relations Skills

Regional employers demonstrate increased demand for teaching skills such as 'lesson planning,' 'record keeping,' 'elementary education,' and 'student placement.' 'Elementary education' represents the only level-specific skill for which employers demonstrate growth in demand; 'elementary education' appeared among the most commonly sought skills 288 percent more often in 2014 than it did in 2010. Regional employers also express increased demand for teaching professionals with 'special education' skills; only two percent of relevant job postings sought professionals with 'special education' skills in 2010, compared to four percent of relevant postings in 2014, a 59 percent increase. Increased regional demand for 'elementary education' skills supports the inclusion of an elementary education concentration in the online MAT program at the requesting institution.

Employers in the Pacific Northwest demonstrate increased demand for teaching professionals with 'community relations' skills; 'community relations' appeared among the most commonly sought skills 389 percent more often in 2014 than it did in 2010. The growth in demand for teaching professionals with 'community relations' skills supports the creation of partnerships between the MAT program at the requesting institution and students' local school districts. For more on employer partnerships, see page 15.

### Teaching Professional Skills with Fastest Growing Demand

2010-2014, Regional Data, Graduate Degree Preferred or Required<sup>3</sup>



## 4) Employer and Student Demand Trends

### Demand over Time

#### Pacific Northwest Employer Demand for Teaching Professionals with Master's Degrees Increased 81 Percent from July 2013 to June 2015

Employers in the Pacific Northwest posted 4,285 jobs for teaching professionals with master's degrees in H1 2015, an 81 percent increase over the 2,362 jobs posted in H2 2013. Employer demand in the state of Oregon increased 171 percent in the same time period.

Oregon employers demonstrate more consistent growth in demand for teaching professionals with master's degrees than employers in the Pacific Northwest; demand in Oregon increased each half since H1 2014.

The steady growth in Oregon employer demand, coupled with the overall growth of employer demand in the Pacific Northwest, indicate a good potential market for an online MAT program at the requesting institution.

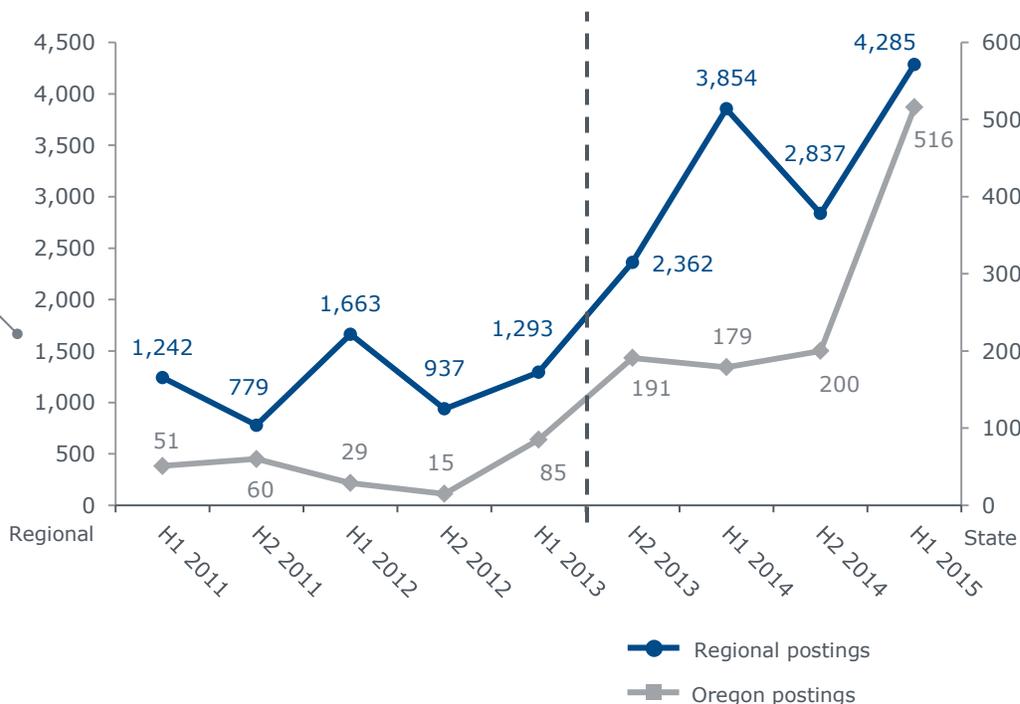
# 171%

Employer demand for teaching professionals with master's degrees in Oregon grew from 191 jobs posted in H2 2013 to 516 jobs posted in H1 2015, a 171 percent increase.

#### Historic Demand for Teaching Professionals

H1 2011-H1 2015, Regional and State Data, Master's Degree Preferred or Required<sup>4</sup>

Due to improved data-mining software, Burning Glass Labor/Insight™ recognizes more positions starting in 2013 H2. Data on either side of the dotted line is thus not directly comparable. Blue numbers refer to regional data and grey numbers refer to state data.



## Regional Contacts Report Stagnant Enrollment in MAT Programs

Only **Institution A**, located outside the Pacific Northwest, reports a steady increase in MAT program enrollments over the last few years. All regional contacts report stagnant or decreasing program enrollments. Administrators at **Institution E** cite the recent recession and its resultant state budget cuts and teacher lay-offs to explain decreased enrollments. Administrators at **Institution D** report relatively steady enrollment in the science-specific MAT program, though contacts attribute a recent, moderate increase in enrollments to improved program advertising.

Only one program, at Institution E, receives more applications than the number of seats available in the program.

### Enrollments in MAT Programs Relative to Institution Size

*Profiled Institutions*

Institution	Program Enrollments	Institutional Enrollments
<b>Institution E</b>	100	6,000
<b>Institution B</b>	35	11,000
<b>Institution C</b>	25	23,200
<b>Institution D</b>	7-10 new students per term; 15 students maximum*	27,700

\*This program enrolls only secondary-level science teachers

## Potential Jobs for Graduates

### Regional Employers Seek Professionals to Fill Math and English Teaching Roles and Administrative Positions

Level-specific titles appear prominently among the job titles most frequently posted in the Pacific Northwest (e.g., 'elementary teacher,' 'high school assistant principal'). This prominence suggests organizing the MAT program curriculum by level rather than subject.

Administrators at **Institution E** require students to choose two consecutive teaching levels to concentrate in during the MAT program. Of the teaching levels listed below, contacts report equal numbers of students choose each option:

- Early childhood education and elementary education
- Elementary education and middle school education
- Middle school education and high school education

Of subject-specific titles, regional employers seek the most 'math teachers.' Other commonly posted job titles include 'English teacher,' 'Spanish teacher,' and 'language arts teacher.' The popularity of English, Spanish, and mathematics suggest the requesting institution should offer curricular concentrations in these subjects to meet regional employer demand and improve graduates' employment prospects.

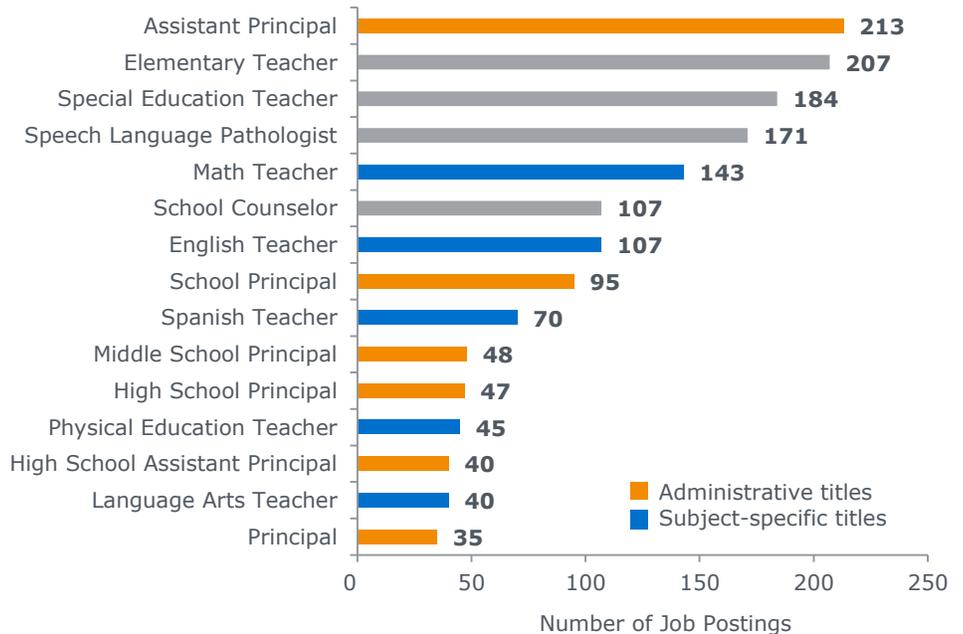
Six administrative titles (e.g., 'assistant principal,' 'school principal') appear on the list of commonly posted job titles. The presence of administrative titles at multiple levels (i.e., 'middle school principal,' 'high school principal') suggests employers of at

all school levels seek teaching professionals with administrative and leadership skills. The requesting institution should confer leadership and administration skills in the MAT program to appeal to students considering a future position in school administration.

### Top Titles for Teaching Professionals in the Pacific Northwest

July 2014-June 2015, Regional Data, Graduate Degree Preferred or Required<sup>5</sup>

n=7,122 job postings, 0 unspecified postings



### Subject- and Level-Specific Titles with Increased Demand\*

2010-2014, Regional Data, Graduate Degree Preferred or Required<sup>6</sup>

Title	Proportion of Relevant 2010 Postings	Proportion of Relevant 2014 Job Postings	Growth
Language Arts Teacher	0.21%	0.61%	+191%
Social Studies Teacher	0.26%	0.58%	+121%
Mathematics Teacher	0.10%	0.19%	+84%
English Teacher	0.84%	1.42%	+69%
Spanish Teacher	0.68%	0.94%	+38%
Elementary Teacher	2.21%	2.72%	+23%
Special Education Teacher	2.16%	2.50%	+15.6%

\*Note: Despite increased demand, individual titles represent a relatively low number of overall relevant postings

5) Burning Glass Labor/Insight™

6) Burning Glass Labor/Insight™

## Potential Employer Partners

### Partner with the Portland, Beaverton, and Eugene Public School Districts for Student Teaching Placements

'Portland Public Schools,' 'Beaverton School District,' 'Eugene School District,' and 'Ashland School District' seek to employ the most teaching professionals with master's degrees in the state of Oregon. Job postings from these four districts compose 21 percent of all jobs posted in the state in the last year. The requesting institution should partner with these school districts for MAT student field placements. Partnerships with local school districts may also increase graduates' employment outcomes since local fieldwork introduces them to potential employers.

Profiled programs that require students to have teaching certification for program admittance do not partner with school districts, since students can implement lessons from the program in their own classrooms. **Institution E** requires field experience during the program, so program administrators forged relationships with school districts surrounding the campus. Administrators note some districts require the program to partner with the district to place student teachers at individual schools within that district. The institution organizes each student's field placement, and the program employs a placement coordinator to facilitate this process.



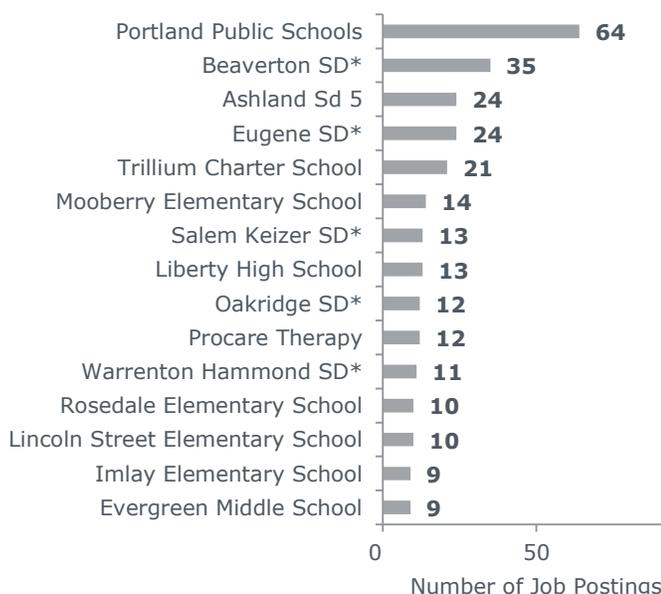
#### Incentivize Local Schools to Host Student Teachers with Vouchers

Though **Institution A** does not require field experience of online MAT students, the institution facilitates fieldwork for face-to-face students via partnerships with most school districts within a 45-mile radius of the campus. Administrators offer vouchers for teachers to take graduate courses at the institution to incentivize local schools to accept student teachers. Administrators award the vouchers to the principal rather than individual teachers, so that he or she can distribute the reward according to his or her discretion. The vouchers may be redeemed for one face-to-face course or part of one online course. The school receives one voucher for each student teaching placement.

### Top Employers for Teaching Professionals<sup>7</sup>

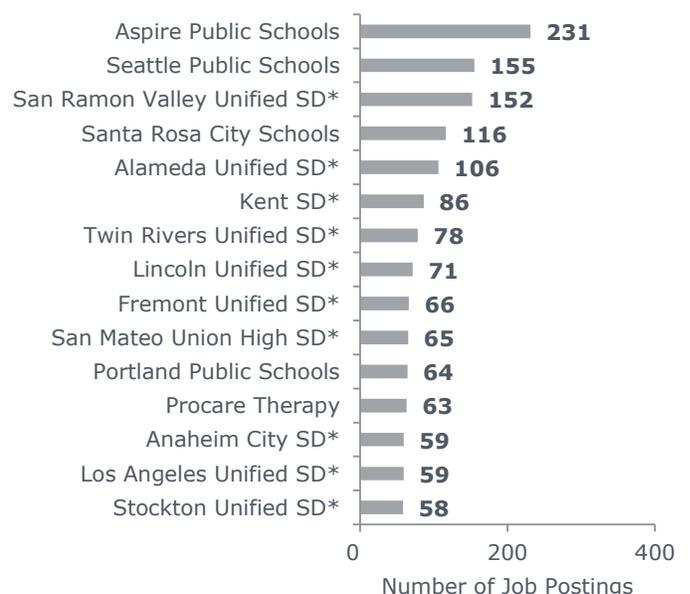
July 2014-June 2015, *Oregon Data, Graduate Degree Preferred or Required*

n=716 job postings, 138 unspecified postings



July 2014-June 2015, *Regional Data, Graduate Degree Preferred or Required*

n=7,122 job postings, 947 unspecified postings



7) Burning Glass Labor/Insight™

## Advertise the Program in Oregon to Increase Enrollments from Local Students

All profiled institutions in the Pacific Northwest report a majority of students reside in-state. Programs in the region also report enrollments from surrounding states. The requesting institution should advertise the MAT program in Oregon and throughout the Pacific Northwest to increase program enrollments.

While most students in the science-specific MAT program at **Institution D** come from in-state, administrators report many online students come from other states in the region. Administrators at **Institution E** report in-state students represent 70 percent of the MAT program cohort. When opening the hybrid program, administrators at the institution had to consider geography; mountains make it difficult for some students to reach campus in the winter months. Administrators at the requesting institution should consider geography when determining what, if any, residency requirements the MAT program will include.

## Emphasize Concentrations to Differentiate the MAT Program from Competitors

Since **Institution D** administers a subject-specific MAT program, administrators emphasize students' ability to increase their content knowledge in program marketing. Contacts at the institution note the science focus of the MAT program makes it unique in the state, and report that administrators chose to create a single-subject program to differentiate Institution D from competitors. The requesting institution should offer concentrations in mathematics, language arts, or ESOL to differentiate its MAT program from regional competitors who do not offer subject-specific concentrations.

### Highlight Various Modality Options

Administrators at **Institution E** emphasize the flexibility of the hybrid format relative to the institution's face-to-face MAT program in advertising materials. Contacts also report success employing marketing messages that highlight the compatibility of the program's format with the needs of working adults.

## Authorize the Online MAT Program in Multiple States to Maintain Steady Enrollments

State and school district regulations regarding the requirement for teachers to hold a master's degree, or regarding pay incentives for teachers who have a master's degree, influence program enrollments. Contacts at **Institution E**, for example, report decreased enrollments following state budget cuts and teacher lay-offs. As regulations vary by state or even school district, and can change quickly, the requesting institution should forge reciprocity agreements in multiple states to lessen the negative impact of state and district policy changes on MAT program enrollments.

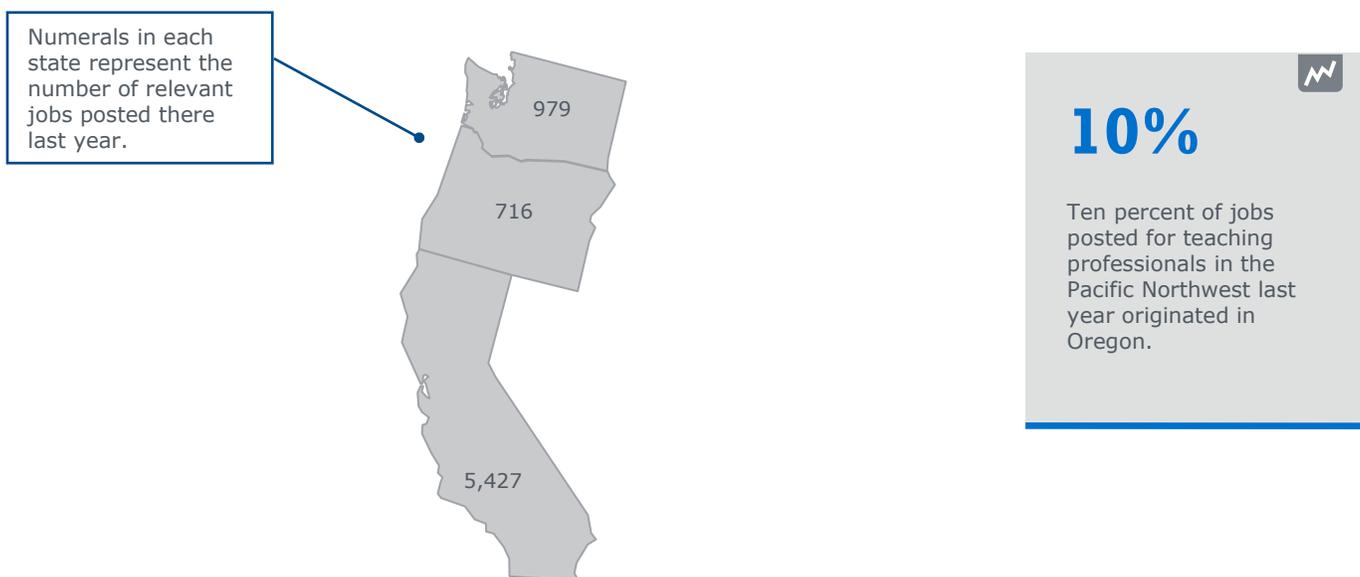
## Locations with High Demand

### California Employers Seek Teaching Professionals Most Frequently in the Pacific Northwest Region

Employers in the Pacific Northwest posted 1,722 jobs last year for teaching professionals with master's degrees. Of these job postings, 716 originated in Oregon. Postings that originate in Oregon compose ten percent of all relevant postings; 14 percent in originate in Washington, and 76 percent in California. The high employer demand in Washington and California for MAT graduates relative to Oregon demand suggests administrators at the requesting institution should authorize the online MAT program in surrounding states to increase the audience of potential students.

#### Regional Employer Demand by State

July 2014-June 2015, Regional Data, Graduate Degree Preferred or Required<sup>8</sup>



### Employers in San Francisco, San Jose, and Portland Exhibit the Greatest Demand Per Capita for Teaching Professionals with Master's Degrees

Within the Pacific Northwest region, the metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) with the highest employer demand for teaching professionals with master's degrees per capita include:

- San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA (33 postings per 100,000 residents),
- San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA (29 postings per 100,000 residents),
- Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA (25 postings per 100,000 residents),
- Vallejo-Fairfield, CA (25 postings per 100,000 residents), and
- Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA (21 postings per 100,000 residents).

The presence of Portland, OR among the MSAs with the highest employer demand per capita suggests administrators at the requesting institution should market the online MAT in Portland to increase in-state student enrollments.

## Metropolitan Statistical Area Employer Demand Per Capita

July 2014-June 2015, Regional Data, Graduate Degree Preferred or Required

