

## How to Hire a Teacher/Athletic Trainer in a Secondary School Setting?

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Are athletic trainers a luxury or necessity? Many years ago it was a clear answer; Certified Athletic Trainers were truly a luxury. However, in recent years many school districts are now considering them as an absolute necessity. In 2003-2005, the Louisiana Athletic Trainers Association (LATA) commissioned a task force to investigate the health care status of the secondary school athlete. The most significant information that came from their investigation was the lack of certified athletic trainers working in the secondary school setting in Louisiana. In a survey conducted by the task force, Louisiana secondary schools had .12 athletic trainers per school compared to a similar survey conducted in Texas which reported .72 athletic trainers per school. The mission of the task force was to help find ways to encourage schools to hire certified athletic trainers. A common way school districts employ an athletic trainer is to hire them as a teacher first and then pay them a stipend to serve as an athletic trainer. However, if an individual desired to become a certified athletic trainer they had to complete a Bachelors degree first and then pursue their teaching credentials which would take another two years to complete. Not many certified athletic trainers desired to invest six years of college to only be paid at the bachelor's degree level.

Members of the LATA task force approached the Department of Education inquiring about alternative teacher certification options. The task force members discovered that the Department of Education was already pursuing this issue and was ready to implement three new sports medicine courses into Schedule Bulletin 741. The Department of Education identified the certified athletic trainer as the only qualified health care professional that would be able to teach these new courses. They also declared that the certified athletic trainer with a bachelor's degree would have to obtain the Career, Technical, Trade and Industrial Education (CTTIE) teacher certification. To obtain the CTTIE teacher certification, certified athletic trainers had to complete one to three teaching methodology courses over three years and could immediately be given a one year temporary teacher certification (CTTTIE) as long as they had two years of work experience as a certified athletic trainer. With this road block quickly knocked down, schools begin to hire certified teacher/athletic trainers.

Schools that have hired CTTIE teacher certified athletic trainers over the past few years:

Central	Zachary	Lutcher	Donaldsonville	Hahnville
Ouachita	Ruston	Sterlington	West Monroe	West Ouachita
Denham Springs	Doyle	St. James	Assumpcion	UHigh (BR)
Thibodaux	Plaquemine	White Castle	East Ibberville	Pineville
Destrehan	Dutchtown	St. Amant	East Ascension	St. Martinville
Airline	Lafayette	New Iberia	Broadmoor	LCB Learning Acedemy
Northwest	Opelousas	Port Barre	Beau Chene	Patterson

The wave of hiring CTTIE teacher athletic trainers began to spread rapidly as the teacher certification road block was addressed. Besides teaching Sports Medicine I, II and III courses, CTTIE teacher certified athletic trainers also began to teach Medical Terminology, \*First Responder, \*Basic EMT and \*Pharmacy Tech as well as other local initiative elective courses.

In some of these schools, athletic trainers who were already working in sports medicine clinics (private clinics, hospitals etc.) servicing those schools became CTTIE teacher certified and were hired on by the school system as a CTTIE teacher certified athletic trainer. Superintendents, School Board Members and

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Principals began to look at the athletic trainer as an employee that could not only add value to athletics but could also add value as a teaching faculty member. School administrators began to realize that a CTTIE teacher certified athletic trainer could impact their school's performance score (SPS) as they contribute toward the increase of

Diploma Endorsements, Industry Based Certifications (First Responder, Pharmacy Tech), Work Based Learning (WBL) hours opportunities for their students as well as supporting the Grade Level Expectations (GLS's) in the core subjects. School administrators also discovered that the "Sports Medicine" career concentration was a great add-on to offer their students. The development of career concentrations were mandated by the passing of the Career Options Law (Act 1124) in 1997.

#### Sports Medicine Courses

**Sports Medicine I** (1/2 credit)

**Sports Medicine II** (1/2 credit)

**Sports Medicine III** (1 credit)

#### Other Related Courses

**Medical Terminology** (1 credit)

**\*First Responder** (1/2 to 2 credits)

**\*Basic EMT** (2 credits)

**\*Pharmacy Tech** (1 credit)

For many schools that have hired CTTIE certified teacher athletic trainers, it was an easy decision and the school system quickly implemented the courses. For other schools it has taken a few years to provide their justification to school board members and administrators in order to allocate the staff position. Two challenges await school systems desiring to pursue this as an option. One challenge is to begin the process of securing the teaching position. The second challenge is to find an athletic trainer who desires to pursue the teaching profession. Both are challenges that many school systems have overcome and many more will in the near future.

Resources for school administrators to learn more about how to move forward on both on those challenges can be located at: [www.lsssmc.ning.com](http://www.lsssmc.ning.com) and/or contact Ronnie Harper Ed.D., ATC at Dutchtown High School, 225-323-4372, [harperr@apsb.org](mailto:harperr@apsb.org).

\*Requires additional certification/training from the Department of Education and/or related agencies.

