

# How Sue Chung's Dream of Teaching in California Came True

## CANDIDATE PROFILE

**Sue Chung**  
**Almaden Country School, San Jose, CA**  
**Two Year Job Search**  
**Relocated from Chicago, IL**

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## JOB SEARCH ADVICE

**Attend a CalWest Connection Event which provides more opportunities for interviews.**

**Attract more schools by broadening your geographic search area and staying open to new locations.**

“Every time I called or contacted CalWest, they were very honest about my job search and my situation, which I really appreciated. I was from out of state and knew it would be tougher to find a position because of that, which made me even more determined. By going through the process with me, they were very helpful.”

Sue Chung

Sue Chung was majoring in business at the University of Illinois in Chicago until she had a dream one night that she was teaching in a third grade classroom. The next day, she switched her major. Sue's confidence in her vision started her on the path to a successful career in education. “I started off in the Chicago public schools. Right after I graduated I took a trip to Korea, and while there, my mom called me and said, “You have an interview, you need to come back sooner.” I went to the interview, and I got a third grade position. Isn't that wild?”

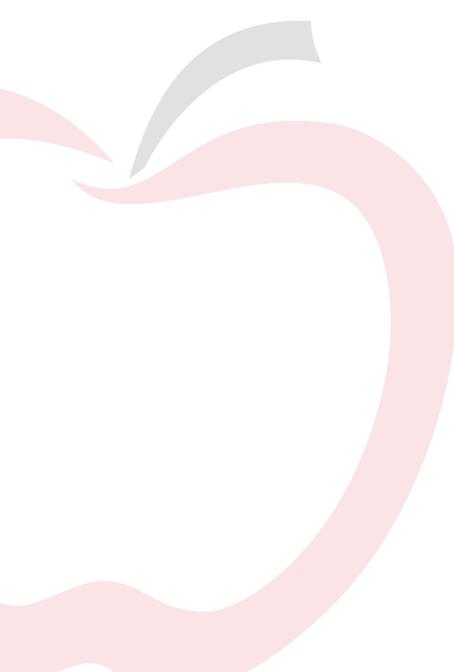
After teaching in the Chicago public schools for 13 years Sue was fed up with all of the political mayhem and moved to an independent school. She didn't know much about independent schools and was pleasantly surprised with the opportunity to work in a supportive environment and build her own dynamic curriculum. “I found a job at a private independent school which I'd never heard of before. It was a new world of possibility.” Seven years in an independent school passed quickly but Sue wasn't sure if continuing to live in Chicago was the right option.

## All Roads Lead to California

With her mom and brother living in southern California and her husband originally from northern California, she would visit the West Coast during vacations. On one of her visits while talking with her husband she said, “Why don't we move because we're here all the time? That was the revelation. We figured we'd both job search and see what happens. I started searching in southern California and I couldn't get any interviews, until I found CalWest.”

Sue researched several companies online to help her find a teaching position in independent schools. She picked CalWest because they were more in tune with the schools in California. She attended a CalWest Connection Event and found it helpful to have a variety of schools in one place, “I didn't have to drive from school to school to see people. They were all there, and it was very convenient.”

Sue felt more at ease because CalWest Recruiting Advisors were available the entire time during the event. “The fact that CalWest people were there to assist me really helped. If I had a



question, I could go directly to them to get advice.” She was able to meet with administrators and schedule school visits while at the Connection Event.

It wasn’t easy for her to find a job right away. “CalWest was trying to help me find a position in southern California, and I even got a couple of interviews, but nothing was biting. My job search turned out to be about a 2 year process.” One of Sue’s goals was to be near her family in southern California but she realized it might be better to widen her search area.

### **The Mind Shift that Made the Difference**

Talking with her Mother and realizing that her family would be glad to have her living closer to them in any part of California helped Sue feel more comfortable with opening her search to a wider region. She decided to aim for both the northern and southern areas of the state.

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*Sue Chung*

Sue contacted CalWest about the change and they were able to set up additional interviews for her in a short period of time. “As soon as I decided that, in a few months, CalWest said they had a school that would like to interview me.” Expanding her geographic area gave her access to more open positions. She felt a connection with Almaden Country School in San Jose and had a preliminary video interview. Sue flew out for a visit and felt a connection with the school. They knew she was the right person and made her an offer.

### **The Confidence to Ask for What She Needed**

Sue was thrilled to receive an offer but wasn’t sure if she could afford to move to California. She talked with CalWest and they advised her on how to discuss this with the school. Asking for what she needed in order to accept the position was the most stressful part of the hiring process for Sue.

The support from CalWest gave her the confidence to address her concerns and work out the details together with the Almaden Country School. Sue accepted a position teaching 7th grade Literature and Language Arts and has been enjoying working there ever since.

### **Embracing a New School Culture**

Adjusting to working at Almaden Country School was smoother than she expected. The culture and close-knit community of the school is similar to where she taught in Chicago. It was one of the easiest transitions she’s made in her 22 years of teaching.

Sue might have been new to some of the events and procedures of the school but she was confident enough to make sure to ask for help and advice from others when needed. “You’re going to struggle, no matter what during your first year, because you try to figure out the ropes, but there are a lot of people around who will give you advice; all you have to do is communicate. My best advice is to make sure you communicate and ask for help, and try not to do everything on your own.”

### **Pleased to have Made The Move**

After teaching predominantly in Chicago, Sue Chung remained dedicated to her goal of working in an independent school in California. She connected with CalWest and worked together with them for two years to find the school that fit her values and teaching style. She was able to land at Almaden Country School in San Jose and now enjoys working in a warm teaching environment where she can live closer to her family.