

TIPS DURING THE INTERVIEW FOR EDUCATORS

OFFICE OF CAREER EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY

INTERVIEWING FOR A TEACHING POSITION

The employment interview is the opportunity for you to discuss with school personnel your education, experiences, activities, and skills that qualify you to be an excellent teacher. You need to relate what you have to offer to what the school district is looking for.

In order to successfully "market" yourself during a 20-minute or 30-minute interview, you need to know yourself and your abilities, and you must be able to communicate your qualifications to the interviewer. According to our survey of local school districts, few hiring decisions are made after just one interview. The majority of districts conduct two or three interviews, so be prepared to go through the interview process more than once for a teaching position.

A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT

- Arriving on time.
- A firm handshake.
- Good eye contact.
- Professional dress.
- Excellent pronunciation.
- Good voice projection.

FOLLOW UP THIS GOOD START BY...

- Offering specific examples to support your answers.
- Providing honest answers based on sound educational experiences and practice.
- Being positive and enthusiastic throughout the interview.
- Asking insightful questions.
- Avoid answering based on what you think they want to hear. While you may want to modify your answers according to the values or philosophy of the school district (if you know them).
- Remember, you have no control over what they are thinking -- you do have control over what you say.
- Look for feedback from the interviewer, but answer according to your convictions and judgments.

AVOID COMMON INTERVIEW "KNOCKOUT" FACTORS SUCH AS:

- Poor communication skills.
- Lack of career knowledge.
- Lack of energy, enthusiasm, and interest.
- Insufficient evidence of achievements and accomplishments.
- Lack of preparation.

PRACTICE ANSWERING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Use the dozens of interview questions are listed in this guide.
- While you won't be asked all of these questions and there are questions not listed that you may be asked, take some time to practice answering some of these questions out loud.
- Practice with a friend, complete a mock interview with the Office of Career Education & Development, speak into a tape recorder -- whatever you do, practice and prepare!

SPEAK LIKE A PROFESSIONAL TEACHER

You do not have to use long words when short words will do. You do not have to sound "stuffy" or arrogant. But you do have to sound educated. That's why practice interviewing is important. Become aware of any "verbal distractions" that slip into your speech. These are words or phrases that detract from the effectiveness of your communication. Examples are: "you know"; "like"; "know what I'm saying?" and excessive um's or ah's.

If your speech is littered with slang, you are branding yourself as someone not ready to teach, someone not ready to be a professional. The first step is becoming aware of the verbal distractions; the second step is eliminating them from your speech. Good speech habits are appropriate whenever you meet educational professionals, parents, and community members as well as when instructing students in a classroom or an after school activity. At all times, present yourself in a professional manner because your job search success will depend on it!

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REMEMBER...

- An interview is a two-way exchange of information.
- You need to discover whether the school district is for you just as much as the district needs to know whether you are a good fit for them.
- Know what is important to you regarding a teaching position. If your research does not find this information, be sure to ask during the interview.
- A national survey of newly hired teachers revealed that the most frequently asked questions concern classroom management, student teaching, personal strengths, personal weaknesses, teaching philosophy, and what-if questions.