

## INTERVIEW TIPS

1. Be aware that you are interviewing the principal as much as he/she is interviewing you. At the same time that you are selling yourself, you are also assessing your compatibility with the school's staff and program. Prior to the interview, discover as much about the environment as possible, including the school, the students, the teachers, and the principal. When a school representative contacts you to schedule the interview, ask if students will be present. If the school arranges the interview on a day when students are not present, ask for permission to make an additional visit when students will be there. Observing staff/student interaction and the manner in which students behave on the playground, in the hall ways, and in the cafeteria will give you insight into the school's culture.
2. Research the school and/or district. The benefits of research are three-fold. First, the more you know about the school and its district the better "feel" you will have for if you are a good fit for the school. Second, the more information you have prior to the interview the better prepared you will be to ask intelligent questions of the interviewer. Finally, the more you know about the school and/or district will allow you to comment on the school's/district's achievements during the interview (always a way to make a positive impression). Successful research strategies include:
  - Buying a local paper. Look for articles and editorials concerning the honor roll, service projects, board meeting results, building projects, and sporting events.
  - Calling the district office. Ask questions about enrollment numbers, test scores, class sizes, and student activities.
  - Obtaining a school/district newsletter. Newsletters usually address issues facing the school, upcoming events, operating procedures, and student achievements.
  - Visiting the district web site.
3. Decide what you should wear. Nothing evokes a negative reaction by a principal more than an inappropriately dressed teaching candidate. How a teacher is dressed has a great deal to do with how he/she is perceived by students, parents and the community. A teacher who is inappropriately dressed will reflect negatively on the school as a whole. Your dress should be a statement about yourself. You should appear comfortable yet professional.
4. Allow plenty of time to travel to the interview. Ideally, you should make a trial run to determine how long it will take to reach the interview location, where you should park, and which entrance you should use. A trial run will also allow you to note the school's appearance. If the school is well maintained, you should make mention of this during your interview.
5. Remember that the interview is a two way street – you are interviewing as much as being interviewed. Although you should appear calm and relaxed during the

interview, you should also be alert, taking note of the school's culture and environment.

6. Be aware that the principal/interviewer will have a set list of questions which will be asked of each candidate being interviewed. Each candidate's responses will be then be noted on an evaluation form which the interviewer(s) will refer to later when evaluating interviewees. Even though it is standard practice for the principal to take notes, you should not. This may indicate to the interviewer that you are still in a "student mode" of attempting to write down everything you hear. The exceptions to this would be if you need to take note of salary figures or to refer to questions you want to ask during the interview.
7. Anticipate the close of the interview. You always want to end the interview on an upbeat note so save some important information about yourself until the conclusion of the interview. This would be a good time to discuss your professional goals, ask the principal questions, and give him/her the opportunity to view your portfolio. This is also a good time to let the interviewer know if you are truly interested in the position. If so, let him/her know that you are impressed with the school and its program and you feel you are qualified for the position and would enjoy teaching in this type of environment. Always be polite and wish the interviewer good luck with the search and thank him/her for his/her time. Also, ask for a time frame regarding when a hiring decision will be made. Do not become over anxious and call too soon. Be sure to send a thank you note 24 – 48 hours after the interview.
8. Take notes after the interview. As you leave the location, take another look at the school and grounds. When you arrive back at your car, jot down your impressions of the interview – make note of the questions you answered well and those you did not answer well. List the school's strengths and weaknesses. These notes will help later as you evaluate different job offers.
9. If the expected time frame for a decision passes without notification, it is permissible to contact the principal's secretary or administrative assistant and simply ask if a decision has been made. If the answer is yes and you were not the successful candidate, once again express your thanks for the opportunity to interview. If a decision has still not been made, use this as an opportunity to reiterate your interest.

## **POWER IN THE DETAILS: TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWS**

1. Make a successful first impression whether it be in the form of an application, resume, or direct contact. You never get a second chance to make a first impression.
2. Practice, practice, practice! Interviewing is a skill that requires development! Practice with a peer or schedule a mock interview at Career Services.
3. Project a positive image. Body language speaks louder than words. In an interview, as much as 90 percent of the impression you make comes from your body language.
4. During the interview, be sure to take time to listen to each question carefully. If you need to take a moment to frame your answer, it is fine to have a few seconds of silence, or you can say you would like a moment to think about the question.
5. Treat the human resources office team as your best friend. Office staffs are powerful team members and you should be sure to give them your best in any contact you have with them.

Source: 2005 AAEE Job Search Handbook for Educators

### **Six “Ps” of Perfect Interviewing**

1. Be Prepared
2. Practice
3. Be Prompt
4. Be Polite
5. Be Professional

Source: 2003 AAEE Job Search Handbook