

Interview Questions for Teachers

During the interview process, teacher candidates are asked a variety of questions about their educational philosophy and attitudes, preparation and curriculum, classroom management styles, and professional characteristics. The following is a list of questions in each of these areas that recruiters tend to ask.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND ATTITUDES

1. What is the most important aspect of teaching to you?
2. Do you think that high test scores promote high self-esteem or vice versa?
3. What is your philosophy on discipline in the classroom?
4. What is your educational philosophy?
5. How important is success to students?
6. What is your reaction to each of these trends?
 - a. Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP)
 - b. Whole language vs. phonics
 - c. Multi-age grouping
 - d. Performance assessment/rubrics
 - e. Instructional Support Teams (IST)
7. What type of grading system should be used in the primary classroom (K-2)? In the intermediate classroom (3-6)?
8. Where do you see computers/technology fitting into the elementary curriculum?
9. What do you see as the principal's role in the school?
10. What is the role of the teacher in the classroom?
11. Why do you want to work in our district?

PREPARATION AND CURRICULUM

1. Discuss current curriculum trends in your area.
2. Describe the format you use to develop a lesson plan.
3. What is the hardest thing you have had to discipline so far? How did you handle it?
4. What is your experience in teaching?
5. Tell me about yourself and your student teaching experience.
6. Describe a lesson plan you developed. What were the objectives, the format, and how did you evaluate if the objectives were met?
7. What materials have you used that you find most effective for the slow learners? The quick learners?
8. What is multi-aged grouping or a multi-level classroom?
9. What discipline programs are familiar to you?
10. How would you teach reading without a Basal reading program? Are you familiar with the curriculum standards in the state in which you are applying?

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

1. What would you want your students to say about you to their parents?
2. Tell how you would set up a developmentally appropriate first grade classroom.
3. What is the hardest thing you have had to discipline so far? How did you handle it?
4. John has a behavioral problem in your classroom. All your attempts to correct the problem have failed. What is your next step?
5. Tell me about your classroom management skills.
6. If I gave you a blank check, what would I see in your classroom?
7. How would you incorporate inclusion into your class?
8. How does a child know if you are a good listener?
9. How would a typical day in your classroom run? What types of activities would you use?
10. How would you physically set up your primary (K-2) classroom? Intermediate (3-6)?
11. How do you handle the different ability levels of students in classes?
12. What do you do with the child who hates school?
13. What are the rules of your classroom? How are they established?
14. What should you do with students who finish early and are ready to move on?

15. How would you involve parents in your classroom?
16. When should you send a note home to parents?
17. How do you deal with an irate parent?
18. What is your ideal classroom setup?
19. How do you know if a student understands what you are teaching during a lesson?
20. Are parent/teacher conferences important? Why or why not?

PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. What would be your attitude and reaction to an administrative decision with which you do not agree?
2. What types of people seem to rub you the wrong way?
3. How do you feel you will go about fitting into an established teaching staff that has had little turnover?
4. What are your recreational activities, hobbies, and interests?
5. What activities are you willing to sponsor if you are hired?
6. What are your plans for future improvement of your professional skills?
7. How would you contribute toward the development of the total school program in your current position?
8. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
9. What is something that frustrates you or angers you?
10. Why do you want to teach?
11. What do you plan to be doing in five years? What are your career goals?
12. What do you believe are the easiest and hardest parts of teaching?

SITUATIONS

1. You have a student who enters your classroom every day crying because she wants to go home. It sometimes takes her an hour to get herself under control. What would you do?
2. Suppose you are teaching a heterogeneous group of second graders math. How would you accommodate all of the learning levels in that setting?
3. You are teaching fourth grade social studies. A student actively participates in class, completes homework, and is eager to learn. When the first two tests are given, the student fails them. What is your plan of action?
4. You know that a staff member has been talking behind your back about what he or she sees as your ineffective teaching methods. What would you do?
5. How do you handle a colleague who constantly speaks negatively about a specific child in the school?

QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. What is the teacher/student ratio in your district?
2. What types of school activities promote parent-teacher-student interaction?
3. What textbooks does the district use in this subject area?
4. Do teachers participate in curriculum review and change?
5. Does your district promote staff development activities and conferences? What types of programs have the teachers attended in the last year?
6. How does the teaching staff feel about new teachers?
7. What discipline procedures does the district use?
8. Do parents support the schools? Does the community?
9. Do your schools use teacher aides or parent volunteers?
10. To what extent do staff members work collaboratively to solve problems and respond to the needs of students?
11. Does the administration encourage field trips for students?
12. How are teachers assigned to extracurricular activities?
13. What are prospects for future growth in the community and its schools?
14. What technology resources will be available to me in the classroom?