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# Effective Interview Questions for Finding the Best Teachers

**TASB HR Services**  
**800.580.7782**  
**[hrservices.tasb.org](http://hrservices.tasb.org)**  
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## SAMPLE TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions correlate to effective teaching practices including the performance standards for teachers (19 TAC §149.1001).

<b>1. Opening Questions (Ice Breakers)</b>		
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Attributes/Listen For</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1.1 Tell us about your experience and how it relates to this position? Why are you interested in this position? <i>or</i> What experience have you had that has prepared you for this position?	Ability to communicate clearly; articulate with purpose	
1.2 What would you bring to our staff that would be unique? <i>or</i> Describe the assets you have to offer this district.	Articulation of purpose, confidence enthusiasm, understands the difference between a teacher (instructing) and an educator (whole package)	
1.3 What makes you, or will make you a great teacher?	Content knowledge; expertise; collaborative; self-awareness	
1.4 Why do you feel this school/district is a good fit for you?	Researched and can articulate differences among schools/districts; values professional growth; parent involvement	
<b>2. Instructional Planning &amp; Preparation</b>		
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Attributes/Listen For</b>	<b>Comments</b>
2.1 How do you know what to teach your students?	Knowledge of curriculum and use of resources & data; understanding of student	
2.2 What are the things you have done that demonstrate initiative and creativity?	Differentiation, student engagement, connecting lessons to real life application; collegiality; collaboration	
2.3 How have you incorporated cross-curricular standards into planning and teaching?	Global awareness, relevance; connectivity	

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Questions	Attributes/Listen For	Comments
2.4 What would you do to determine whether or not your lesson plans were effective?	Sequencing, pacing, addressing student needs, understanding; uses data and assessments	
2.5 Give an example of what you did (or would do) to engage a student who was bored or not participating? What was the outcome?	Shows caring and concern; willingness to adjust and problem-solve; differentiate; individualization; analyzes student learning; uses variety of assessment strategies	
2.6 What information do you feel is important to know about your students? Why?	Knowledge of students personally as well as their academic progress; embraces diversity	
<b>3. Classroom Management, Organization, Environment, and Safety</b>		
Questions	Attributes/Listen For	Comments
3.1 Describe a situation when you had to address the behavior of a student who was constantly disruptive.  <i>or</i> You have a student who is constantly disruptive. What do you do?	Ability to develop expectations for classroom behavior; how rules are set w/student input; consistent application of enforcement; dealing with interventions	
3.2 How would your students describe you? Why?	Viewed as a caring adult and is trustworthiness	
3.3 How have you organized your classroom to maximize instruction?	Class set up to encourage interactions; use of group interactions; project-based accommodation for individual student needs	
3.4 Describe a time when you worked with a reluctant student. What were the results? What did you learn?  <i>or</i> While monitoring and interacting with small groups you notice one student is isolating and crying. What would you do?	Allows student to express themselves; respectful, caring	
3.5 You see a student cheating on a test. What would you do?	Assists student in owning behavior and identifying consequences; keeps matter private	

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4. Professional Knowledge and Pedagogy		
Questions	Attributes/Listen For	Comments
4.1 Describe professional development you have attended recently, why you chose it, and how you will use it to benefit your students.	Seeks varied opportunities for growth; stays current w/research; continuous learning	
4.2 Describe a time when you suspected a child was being neglected or abused. What did you do?  <i>or</i> How would you respond to unethical behavior by a student, parent or staff member?	Integrity; ethical behavior; knowledge of law	
4.3 How have you adapted your instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners?	Expresses clear, specific ideas and an understanding about differentiated learning; uses data to make decisions	
4.4 What do you do to stimulate student interest in learning that other teachers don't do?  <i>or</i> Describe how you have stimulated students' interest in learning.	Inspires and motivates; plans instruction appropriate to students	
4.5 Describe a lesson you taught recently and how you knew it was effective.	Takes ownership of process; sequential lessons; student engagement	
4.6 What do you believe parents expect from you as their child's teacher?	Student focused; focus on student growth; personal connection with students	
5. Instructional Strategies and Assessment		
Questions	Attributes/Listen For	Comments
5.1 What strategies have you used with a student who performed poorly on assignments or assessments? How do you know these worked?	Ability to use data to inform/adjust instructional strategies	
5.2 How do you meet the needs of students with learning differences?	Uses assessment data, collaboration with other professionals; Adjusts pace and differentiates instruction based on student needs.	

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5.3 How have you integrated technology into your teaching?	Is proficient with various types of technology; has personal level of comfort using technology	
5.4 How has the diversity of your students influenced your teaching?	Inclusive practices that address student diversity (language, culture, race, gender, special needs of students)	
5.5 How do you ensure that your lessons are relevant to your students?	Focus on student involvement; manages situation so students identify relevancy	
5.6 What system do you have in place to help students monitor their progress and set individual learning goals?	Uses formal and informal assessments; students participate in individualized goal setting	
5.7 Several students were unable to complete their homework last night. They report that they did not understand how to do the assigned work. What would you do?	Plans for and accommodates those needing re-teaching w/o re-teaching to the whole class	
5.8 What techniques do you use to involve parents in their child's learning?	Involves parents in planning for their child's learning.	
<b>6. Leadership, Teamwork, Professional Growth, Ethical Behavior</b>		
Questions	Attributes	Comments
6.1 Describe when you have been a part of a work team. What role did you play on the team?	Seeks feedback from colleagues, supervisors; participates in learning communities; demonstrates leadership	
6.2 Give an example of a professional learning community that you have participated in and how you used the experience.	Participates in professional growth; applies learning; up-to-date with best practices	
6.3 Describe a challenging experience you have had with a colleague or administrator. How did you resolve the situation?	Professional integrity; problem-solving; joint ownership of problem; ethical behavior	
6.4 You have noticed that a teacher on your grade level team is having a difficult time with the instructional pacing and is behind in delivering the team-planned lessons. She starts asking you for help. What would you do?	Demonstrates leadership; models ethical behavior; teacher helps colleague, but doesn't enable weakness; coaches colleague to independence	

## EXAMPLE PERFORMANCE RATINGS

<b>Performance Factors</b>	<b>Far Exceeds Job Requirements</b>	<b>Exceeds Job Requirements</b>	<b>Meets Job Requirements</b>	<b>Needs Some Improvement</b>	<b>Does Not Meet Minimum Requirements</b>
<b><i>Quality</i></b>	Leaps tall buildings with a single bound.	Must take running start to leap over tall building.	Can only leap over a short building or medium with no spires.	Crashes into building when attempting to jump over them.	Cannot recognize building at all, what's more jump.
<b><i>Timeliness</i></b>	Is faster than a speeding bullet.	Is as fast as a speeding bullet.	Not quite as fast as a speeding bullet.	Would you believe a slow bullet?	Wounds self with bullets when attempting to shoot gun.
<b><i>Initiative</i></b>	Is stronger than a locomotive.	Is stronger than bull elephant.	Is stronger than a bull.	Shoots the bull.	Smells like a bull.
<b><i>Adaptability</i></b>	Walks on water consistently.	Walks on water in emergencies.	Washes with water.	Drinks water.	Passes water in emergencies.
<b><i>Communication</i></b>	Talks with God.	Talks with the Angels.	Talks to himself.	Argues with himself.	Loses those arguments.

## Activity—Candidate Response Ratings

**Directions:** Select one question from the Sample Teacher Interview Questions provided and describe the four criteria that will be used to assess candidate responses.

<b>EXAMPLE</b>			
<b>Question: How did you decide to become a teacher?</b>			
Ineffective	Partially Effective	Effective	Highly Effective
Unclear motivation Likes the school calendar Teaching as an afterthought	Career limitations in first major Some awareness or consideration of teaching as a career	Experience with students in a non-school setting(s) Participation in child-center program(s) in high school or college Professional teacher training	In addition to effective indicators: Life-long desire to teach Child focused Desires to make a difference
<b>Question:</b>			
Ineffective	Partially Effective	Effective	Highly Effective