

SCHOOL DISTRICT

STANDARD HIRING PROCEDURES

Certificated Staff: Teaching Assistants
 Teachers
 Administrators

Positions: Regular Probationary
 Regular Part-Time
 Long-Term Substitute

This ‘Standard Hiring Procedure’ was prepared by James M. Merrins Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools (1979-1995), working with members of his district’s administrative team.

The ‘Standard Hiring Procedures’ should not be shared other than among school district administrators. Items in the appendices can be duplicated and shared with other members of the district’s hiring team on a need-to-know basis.

**All materials in this document may be copied,
modified, and used as needed.**

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SAMPLE

PHILOSOPHY

The Fredonia Central School District seeks to hire the best available teachers, administrators and teaching assistants. Vacant positions are filled competitively unless a specific individual has a legal or contractual right to the position.

There should be neither favoritism nor discrimination shown to any candidate on the basis of experience, previous salary or any reason prohibited by State and Federal Laws.

Building administrators and teachers are key partners in the instructional staff hiring process. Administrators and teachers carry the responsibility for supervision of new employees and ultimately determine the success of the employee and the success of the school program.

A. ADVERTISEMENT

The Superintendent will advertise all instructional staff position vacancies.

1. A vacancy in a certification area in which the availability of candidates is known to be low will be advertised in state-wide and out-of-state college placement offices and local newspapers.
2. A vacancy in a certification area in which the availability of candidates is known to be high will be advertised through the SUNY College at Fredonia Placement Office and local newspapers.

When vacant positions are advertised, an announcement of vacancies shall be posted in all school building offices and faculty rooms by the building principals.

Copies of standard vacancy notices for newspapers and college placement offices are found in Appendix A.

All instructional staff position vacancies will be advertised except in the following instances:

1. If another position in the same area of certification becomes vacant during the interview process or becomes vacant within three (3) months of the most recent interviews for a similar vacancy, and the hiring team deems the second, (third, fourth, etc.) ranked candidate(s) to be of the same high qualifications as the candidate who filled the first vacancy, then the new vacancy may be filled without readvertisement of the position at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools.
2. If a current long-term substitute is available to fill a long-term substitute vacancy in the same certification area, for the same or a different person, then the current long-term substitute may be continued without advertisement of the position at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools.

B. APPLICATION

Inquiries

All inquiries regarding the possibility of joining the professional staff are to be POSITIVELY ENCOURAGED. All applicants must apply via a letter of interest to the Superintendent stating their name, address and area(s) of certification. The Superintendent will acknowledge the letter and inform the applicant of any vacancies in the area of certification or that the letter of interest will remain on file for one year. An application, notice of vacancy and job description will be mailed to the applicant should a vacancy occur within one year of the date of the letter of interest.

Dissemination of Applications

No person will be given an instructional staff application unless a vacancy has been posted and advertised.

Applications will only be provided in response to WRITTEN inquiries. If a person calls for an application, an explanation of the application procedure should be given; i.e., the request for an application must be in writing and applications are only provided for advertised vacancies.

A summary of the application procedure, for use by office staff, is found in Appendix B.

A copy of the current teacher application is found in Appendix C.

Application by Current Staff

Current staff members applying for a position need not complete the entire application procedure. They should be advised to submit a letter of interest to the Superintendent stating the position in which they are interested and their reasons for applying. They should be encouraged to update their file with a current vita, course work, community service, references and other support materials. The update of the file is not required and is the employee's option.

C. SCREENING OF CANDIDATES

Courtesy Interviews

The hiring administrators may not interview any candidate who does not meet the standards of the District and/or the caliber in the available candidate group. A courtesy interview is not permitted.

Screening of Applications from the Current Staff

Candidates who are current employees of the District shall be given careful consideration in the screening process.

Following the review of all applications, the hiring administrator shall inform applicants who are current staff members of one of the following:

1. They will not be considered for the position and the reason(s) for this.
2. They will be considered for the position and will be interviewed.

Background and Experience of Candidates

It is important that the screening team seek candidates with broad experience, certification or willingness to obtain certification in more than one area, and willingness and ability to teach students of diverse abilities at different grade levels. These characteristics are extremely important in light of factors such as the New York State Standards, shifting enrollments at grade levels, shifts in curriculum to different grade levels, and shifts in curricular emphasis in some programs.

Reference Checks of Applicants

Prior to the scheduling of an initial interview, the hiring administrator must:

1. Have at least one positive candidate reference from a school administrator (or cooperating teacher of an inexperienced applicant) who has direct knowledge of the candidate.
2. Have the candidate's completed application in hand and have or make arrangements to have ALL support documents in hand prior to an interview. (NOTE: If the candidate's college placement papers are not on hand, the hiring administrator must order, receive and review them prior to the interview.)

C. SCREENING OF CANDIDATES (Continued)

Screening of Applicants

Any applicants screened from the hiring procedure shall be notified in writing by the hiring administrators as soon as reasonable. If there is an indication that the interview process may not yield a successful candidate, then the notification in writing should be sent only to those candidates who will not be considered under any circumstances (i.e. bad reference, lack of certification, unqualified, etc.) The notification in writing to screened-out applicants shall be a personalized letter in a standard format (see: Appendix D).

A notification in writing need not be sent to persons who do not return the District's application.

A copy of the notification in writing shall be attached to the application. The application shall be placed in the file and the file returned to the District Office.

D. INTERVIEWS

The interview team(s) shall interview not less than five candidates for each vacancy unless the Superintendent agrees that there are fewer than five qualified applicants in the pool of applicants. If there is more than one vacancy in analogous positions (same certification), an appropriate number of additional candidates must be interviewed unless the Superintendent agrees that there are too few qualified individuals in the pool of applicants.

NOTE: A candidate should not be interviewed unless his/her application is complete INCLUDING POSITIVE PROOF OF CURRENT NEW YORK STATE CERTIFICATION (or written verification of eligibility). The Superintendent WILL NOT interview any candidate without a complete application.

Arranging the Interview

When arranging the interview, the candidate should be made aware of the following:

1. Correct spelling of the hiring administrator's name.
2. Address and location of the District.
3. Date, time and place of the interview.
4. ANY SUPPORT MATERIALS MISSING FROM THE CANDIDATE'S APPLICATION and the arrangements for receipt of the missing support materials prior to the interview.
5. Approximate length of the interview.
6. With whom (s)he will interview (administrator, team).
7. The starting date for the position.

Scheduling the Interview

If possible, all candidates should be scheduled for interviews over a short period of time, preferably on the same day.

Interdisciplinary Interviewing Team

In filling certified positions an interdisciplinary team(s) including administrators, teachers, and in some cases other certified personnel, shall be used to interview candidates.

D. INTERVIEWS (Continued)

1. Service of teachers on an interview team is voluntary. However, the administrator should insure the existence of an interdisciplinary (or multi-grade level in elementary) team.
2. The interview team should not have members who are personal friends or relatives of any of the candidates being interviewed. To the greatest extent possible the interview team should be free of political bias. The hiring administrator shall discuss this issue with the interview team. Members of the interview team should be asked to forgo participation on the team if they cannot approach all the candidates objectively.
3. To the greatest extent possible, the same team must interview all candidates for the same position.
4. Prior to the interviews, the hiring administrator **MUST** meet with the interview team to review:
 - a. The professional role of the interview team.
 - b. The advisory role of the interview team.
 - c. The need for confidentiality.
 - d. Equal treatment of all candidates
 - (1) Same introductory statement
 - (2) Same format (See: Appendix E)
 - (3) Same questions (See: Appendix F) and below)
 - e. Non-discrimination (See: Appendix G)
 - (1) Consistency of questioning
 - (2) Absence of jokes and innuendo during the interview
 - f. Employment criteria
 - g. Consideration for the position
 - (1) Special skills or characteristics sought
 - team skills
 - team match
 - academic concentration
 - teaching style

D. INTERVIEWS (Continued)

- (2) Specific questions to be asked and the responses being sought (See: Appendix F.1 and F.2)
 - h. Completion of the interview rating forms (See: Appendix H)
 - i. Ranking of the candidates
 - j. Follow-up meeting of the interview team
 - k. Security of confidential material and statements
1. The hiring administrator should review the questions to be asked by the interviewing team. It is recommended that questions be used from the approved question list (Appendix F).
5. After each interview, the members of the team will promptly and independently complete the interview rating form for each applicant. The candidates shall be rated against the interviewers' expectations of the ideal.
6. Following the interviews of all the candidates the members of the interview team (or the hiring administrator) will review candidates and share the results with the Superintendent.
7. The hiring administrator will collect and hold confidential the list of questions, interview rating forms and ranking of all interviewers in case of any claims of discrimination in the hiring process.

Interviews with the Superintendent

The Superintendent will interview at least the top three candidates, unless there is sufficient reason to interview a different number.

It is best that the Superintendent interview the same day as the hiring administrator and the interdisciplinary team, rather than having the candidates come back at a later date. If there is an exceptionally large number of candidates, separate interviews with the Superintendent may be arranged. If the Superintendent is to interview on the same day as the hiring administrator and interdisciplinary team, the interview schedule should be approved by the Superintendent in advance so that he can be available.

If asked about salary, the hiring administrators may state only the starting salary or the salary range for a position. The Superintendent shall discuss salary with the candidates. (See: Appendix L)

E. REFERENCES

NOTE: A candidate's prior teaching experience is the most important predictor of success, more important than the interview. Care should be taken to invest adequate time and energy in checking references.

CAUTION: It is psychologically difficult to objectively analyze the remarks of a reference after one has psychologically "bonded" himself to the candidate.

A minimum of three comprehensive telephone references are required (in addition to the pre-interview reference) for a candidate to be recommended to the Superintendent, unless the Superintendent agrees that fewer are needed. The hiring administrators must have at least one reference from either an administrator who has direct knowledge of the candidate's professional performance or a teacher who had direct supervision of the candidate's student teaching (in the case of an inexperienced teacher). The references must be recorded on the District telephone reference form. (See: Appendix I). It is the responsibility of the hiring administrators to spend sufficient time with the telephone references to obtain a thorough profile of the candidate.

If the candidate has prior teaching experience, the hiring administrator should ask the Superintendent to obtain a telephone reference from a Superintendent in a prior employment District of the candidate. The hiring administrator should not contact the prior Superintendent of a candidate if the Superintendent is handling that reference.

For administrative positions, a visit to the candidate's home school is considered appropriate.

F. SELECTION

The hiring administrator (or interview team in some buildings) will discuss the top candidates with the Superintendent.

If, after discussion of the candidates, the hiring administrator and/or interview team and/or Superintendent determine that the candidates do not meet the minimum acceptable standard for recommendation to the Board, the position will be readvertised, and new applicants will be sought.

If two or more finalists for a position are judged to be equal, consideration will be given to the candidate with residency and/or previous experience in the District.

The Superintendent will determine which, if any, of the hiring administrator's (and interview team's) top candidates is to be recommended to the Board. The Superintendent will not recommend to the Board a candidate other than one of the top candidates without the concurrence of the hiring administrators. If the Superintendent is not satisfied with any of the top recommended candidates, the hiring administrator will be directed to seek, screen and interview additional qualified candidates.

The Superintendent will recommend to the Board the person who in his opinion is the best candidate for the position.

When the candidate is called to be offered the job, the hiring administrator shall inform the candidate of the following:

1. Acceptance of the position is a contractual obligation under New York State law. The candidate may not accept any other position without the required legal notice to and release from the Fredonia Central School District Board of Education.
2. Starting salary.
3. Starting date.
4. Required attendance at new teacher orientation and the dates.
5. Scheduled date of Board appointment.
6. Scheduling of the required physical exam.
7. Required inservice training (such as Essential Elements of Instruction, Science Kits and Growing Healthy).
8. Obligations of part-time teachers, if applicable. (Board Policy #7120)

F. SELECTION (Continued)

9. Required official support documents:
 - a. Required letter(s) of verification of previous professional employment (only for experiences being credited on the salary schedule).
 - b. Required copy of certification (or formal notice of certification status).
 - c. Required official transcripts of all college work.

Upon acceptance of the job by a candidate, the non-selected candidates who were not interviewed shall be notified by letter from the hiring administrator that the position has been filled by another candidate (See: Appendix J).

Upon acceptance of the job by a candidate, all non-selected candidates who were interviewed and/or who are District employees shall be immediately notified by an appropriate letter, mailed within 24 hours (if possible the same day). The applications and support materials, with the copy of the letter of non-selection, shall be returned to the District Office.

Immediately upon acceptance of the job by the candidate, the hiring administrator shall notify: 1) the Superintendent; 2) the members of the interview team of the selection; and 3) the District Nurse (to schedule a physical exam). In the case where the candidate hired was not the first choice (first ranked) of the interview team, the hiring administrator shall, using discretion and due regard for confidentiality, explain the reasons the candidate was hired. The letter, memo or call to the interviewing team shall ask them to hold the information confidential until the hiring administrator has had time to notify the unsuccessful candidates.

Upon receipt of the successful candidate's hiring materials from the hiring administrator, the Superintendent shall forward the candidate a letter of confirmation (See: Appendix K).

G. REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

For a candidate to be recommended to the Board, the following materials must be provided by the hiring administrators to the Superintendent:

1. Teacher application and all support documents.
2. A minimum of three comprehensive telephone references (in addition to the pre-interview reference) on the District form.
3. Interview rating forms from:
 - a. Hiring administrators.
 - b. Interview team members.

H. ORIENTATION

Orientation for all new and returning staff (leave of one year or longer) shall be held prior to the end of the first month of the new school year.

The Fredonia Teachers' Association shall be invited to send a representative to observe the administration's discussion of the Agreement and the evaluation process.

The hiring administrators shall arrange orientation for a new teacher hired during the school year.

Following the orientation, a letter shall be placed in the oriented teacher's personnel file indicating the completion of orientation and the topics covered during orientation.